Force as the servant and guardian of justice

Juridical internationalism and the French plan for the League of Nations in 1917-1919

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

This thesis examines French political debates related to the founding of the League of Nations in the years 1917-1919 and the political and ideological reasons that led to the oblivion of the French juridical internationalist model for the League. When the League of Nations was created in the Paris Peace Conference that followed the end of World War I, the French delegation presented a model for the League that was based on a specific French current of internationalism (juridical internationalism) largely forgotten today. It was opposed both to the Anglo-American view presented by American President Woodrow Wilson and the British delegation and the view of French Premier Clemenceau.

In order to recover the intentions of the participants to the political discussions, this thesis employs Quentin Skinner's methodological reflections on the history of ideas. The source material consists of the minutes of the French National Assembly, the Senate and the Paris Peace Conference as well as the notes of the most prominent advocate of juridical internationalism, Léon Bourgeois. These records are studied by situating them in their historical context and in relation to relevant intellectual traditions and ongoing political discussions. The formulation of the French policy is explored in three different contexts that capture the national and international levels of discussion: the French parliament, the French Interministerial Commission on the League of Nations and the Paris Peace Conference. The studies of Peter Jackson (2013) and Scott G. Blair (1992) on the French League of Nations policy constitute the main works of secondary literature.

The theoretical framework of this study relies on the English School's pluralistic approach to international relations. Different conceptions of the League of Nations are examined using the concepts of realism and idealism in international relations theory. These concepts help demonstrate the differences and similarities between juridical internationalism, Wilsonian idealism and traditional realist power politics.

Historiography of the Paris Peace Conference has often presented the situation as a confrontation between traditional balance of power politics and Wilsonian idealism, but the juridical internationalist conception of the new world order was actually something between these two. By analysing this French current of internationalism through the concepts of realism and idealism, this thesis demonstrates that juridical internationalism represented a third way between the two traditional paradigms that combined elements of both.

The juridical internationalists envisaged a League of Nations based on the codification of international law and equipped with a permanent tribunal and powerful systems of legal, economic, diplomatic and military sanctions enforced by an international army and a permanent command structure. This thesis puts forward the interpretation that the merits of this conception of the League were not properly appreciated during the Paris Peace Conference because it was overshadowed by the diplomatic and political calculations of Wilson and Clemenceau. Later, the juridical internationalist model has been disregarded as a result of being misunderstood as idealism and linked to the negative connotations the term carries. In reality, this model combined elements of realism and idealism similar to the rationalist and solidarist inclinations of the English School.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
internationalism, League of Nations, France, realism, idealism, Léon Bourgeois, international relations, juridical internationalism, English School

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Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan Kansainliiton perustamiseen vuosina 1917–1919 liittyneitä ranskalaisia poliittisia keskusteluja sekä niitä poliittisia ja ideologisia syitä, jotka johtivat juridiseen internationalismiin perustuneen Kansainliiton ranskalaisen mallin unohtumiseen. Kun Kansainliittoa oltiin perustamassa Pariisin rauhankonferenssissa ensimmäisen maailmansodan jälkeen, Ranskan delegaatio esitti liitolle erityiseen ranskalaiseen internationalismin suuntaukseen, juridiseen internationalismiin, perustuvaa mallia, joka on suurelta osin jäänyt huomiotta historiantutkimuksessa. Sitä vastassa olivat sekä Yhdysvaltojen presidentin Woodrow Wilsonin ja Ison-Britannian delegaation angloamerikkalainen näkemys että Ranskan pääministeri Clemenceaun näkemys.

Poliittiseen keskusteluun osallistuneiden intentioiden selvittämiseksi tutkielmassa sovelletaan Quentin Skinnerin menetelmällisiä pohdintoja aatehistoriallisesta tutkimuksesta. Tutkimuksen lähdeaineisto koostuu Ranskan kansalliskokouksen ja senaatin sekä Pariisin rauhankonferenssin pöytäkirjoista sekä juridisen internationalismin keskeisen puolestapuhujan, Léon Bourgeois'n, muistiinpanoista. Näitä tekstejä on tutkittu sijoittamalla ne historialliseen kontekstiinsa, relevanttiin aatehistorialliseen jatkumoon sekä suhteeseen aikansa poliittisten keskusteluiden kanssa, jotta saataisiin selville, mitä kirjoittajat teksteillään tarkoittivat. Ranskalaisen kansainliittopolitiikan muotoutumista tarkastellaan kolmessa keskustelujen kansallista ja kansainvälistä tasoa ilmentävässä kontekstissa: Ranskan parlamentissa, Ranskan ministeriöiden välisessä kansainliittokomissiossa sekä Pariisin rauhankonferenssissa. Sekundäärilähteinä käytetään erityisesti Peter Jacksonin (2013) sekä Scott G. Blairin (1992) tutkimuksia Ranskan kansainliittopolitiikasta.

Tutkimuksen teoreettisena viitekehyksenä toimii englantilaisen koulukunnan pluralistinen lähestymistapa kansainvälisten suhteiden tutkimukseen. Kansainliiton eri vaihtoehtoja tutkitaan kansainvälisen politiikan tutkimuksen käsitteiden, realismin ja idealismin, kautta. Käsitteet havainnollistavat eroja ja yhteneväisyyksiä yhtäältä juridisen internationalismin ja toisaalta Wilsonin idealismin ja perinteisen realistisen valtapolitiikan välillä.

Pariisin rauhankonferenssin historiografia on usein esittänyt tilanteen vastakkainasetteluna perinteisen voimatasapainopolitiikan sekä wilsonilaisen idealismin välillä, mutta juridis-internationalistinen näkemys uudesta maailmanjärjestyksestä asettui itse asiassa näiden kahden väliin. Analysoimalla tätä ranskalaista internationalismin suuntausta realismin ja idealismin käsitteiden avulla, tämä tutkimus osoittaa, että se edusti omaa suuntaustaan, joka sekoitti ominaisuuksia molemmista perinteisistä paradigmoista.

Ranskan juridiset internationalistit suunnittelivat kansainvälisen lain kodifiointiin perustuvan Kansainliiton, jolla oli pysyvä tuomioistuin ja tehokkaat laillisten, taloudellisten, diplomaattisten ja sotilaallisten pakotteiden järjestelmät, jotka takaisi kansainvälinen armeija ja pysyvä komentorakenne. Tämä tutkimus esittää, että Kansainliiton malli jäi Pariisin rauhankonferenssissa Wilsonin ja Clemenceaun diplomaattisen ja poliittisen laskelmoinnin jalkoihin eikä siten saanut ansaitsemaansa huomiota. Jälkeenpäin se on usein sivuutettu historian ja kansainvälisten suhteiden tutkimuksessa, koska se on ymmärretty väärin idealismina ja yhdistetty termiin liittyviin negatiivisiin konnotaatioihin. Todellisuudessa tämä malli yhdisti realismin ja idealismin elementtejä muistuttaen englantilaisen koulukunnan solidarismia ja rationalismia.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
internationalismi, Kansainliitto, Ranska, realismi, idealismi, kansainväliset suhteet, juridinen internationalism, englantilainen koulukunta

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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim and previous research

> Out of the horror of four years of war had emerged, like a supreme protest, a new idea which was implanting itself in the minds of all people: that of the necessity for civilized nations to join together for the defence of law and order and the maintenance of peace.
>
> - Léon Bourgeois' communication to the Nobel Committee in December 1922[1]

The League of Nations was an intergovernmental organisation established after the First World War. It was created by the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919 to help maintain world peace. The unprecedented scale of destruction experienced in the Great War created the political will to build a world organisation that would facilitate multilateral cooperation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Despite the fact that the United States never officially joined the League, the Covenant was largely based on the ideas of American President Woodrow Wilson. There were, however, other ways to envisage a peaceful organisation of the world. One of these was based on a specifically French current of internationalism advocated by Léon Bourgeois in the Paris Peace Conference. This French conception of the League has to a great extent been forgotten.

This thesis examines the political debates in France related to the founding of the League of Nations in the years 1917-1919. The main aim of this thesis is to offer a better understanding of what the French conception of the League was, how it differed from the dominant Anglo-American view and of the political dynamics behind its formation. It will also seek to place this French current of internationalism in the realism-idealism scheme of international relations theory (IR). This thesis also seeks to prove the validity of the French juridical internationalist model and restore it to the historiography of IR theory to provide a more diverse image of thinking about security and international relations in the age of the Great War.

The purpose of this thesis is to discover why the juridical internationalist model of the League of Nations proposed by Léon Bourgeois in the Paris Peace Conference has been

[1] Bourgeois, Léon (1922): The Reasons for the League of Nations. *Nobel Lectures*, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1920/bourgeois/lecture/ (accessed 22 January 2020).

largely ignored in historiography. I argue that there are two answers to this question. First, there were diplomatic and political reasons that led to the juridical internationalist model of the League of Nations being side-lined in the Paris peace negotiations and subsequently forgotten by history. Second, there were ideological reasons behind the failure of the French model at the international negotiations and its subsequent oblivion. Despite the fact that juridical internationalism was an important school of thought in France, it has been disregarded in later studies due to internationalism's unjust linkage to idealism.[2]

After the First World War, the question of the founding of the League of Nations was discussed in the Paris Peace Conference. The French delegation at these negotiations was led by Léon Bourgeois, an accomplished politician and peace activist. His vision of the League was based on a strand of French internationalism that I will call 'juridical internationalism', following the terminology used by Peter Jackson.[3] It was opposed both to the Anglo-American view of American President Woodrow Wilson and the British delegation, as well as the view of the French Premier Georges Clemenceau, who was leading the French delegation. Bourgeois tried to defend his plan of the League against the powerful Anglo-American coalition without the support of his own government. As a result, his conception lost to Wilson's plan and has later fallen into oblivion.

A hundred years later, the current world organisation, the United Nations (UN), is still struggling with much the same problems concerning international cooperation and state sovereignty as the founders of the League of Nations. Recent developments in world politics show that support for the UN and multilateral cooperation is diminishing and often left in the shadow of nationalism and each country's selfish interests. In particular, this development is manifested by the recent actions of the United States that has exited the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UN Human Rights Council. Members of the realist school in international relations have succeeded in spreading the image of internationalism as a utopian aversion and thus undermining belief in it.[4] For these reasons, I think that it is

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[2] Jackson, Peter (2013): *Beyond the Balance of Power.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2-11; Sluga, Glenda (2013): *Internationalism in the age of nationalism*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 150-151.

[3] Jackson 2013, 5.

[4] Sluga, Glenda and Clavin, Patricia (2017): *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-century History*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 7-8.

important to increase public debate on the role of the United Nations or an alternative way of organising global cooperation. My thesis aims to contribute to this discussion. The French model, representing a kind of realist internationalism, might suggest solutions that are worth considering today when the need for global multilateral cooperation is more pressing than ever.

France offers an interesting perspective for the study of the League of Nations because the international negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference were dominated by American President Wilson and the British delegation and because this Anglo-American vision is manifested in the final Covenant of the League. The French juridical internationalists had a very different view of the role of the League of Nations, which has been largely ignored. Also, as Jackson has argued, although the historiography on the Paris Peace Conference often presents the situation as a confrontation between traditional balance of power politics and Wilsonian idealism, the juridical internationalist conception of the new world order was actually something between these two.[5]

The French delegation's work at the Paris Peace Conference on the League of Nations is not well understood in historiography. It is mostly represented as just another version of the traditional method of reorganising the balance of power against Germany. However, this interpretation ignores the distinction between two currents in the French conception of security: the traditionalists and the juridical internationalists.[6] The British and American strands of internationalism from this era have been the subject of multiple studies over the years, but traditional historiography often omits French presence at the negotiations of the League of Nations altogether or presents their influence as being destined to be minimal from the start. This omission is in large part due to a lack of studies based on French sources. The false or incomplete interpretations of French policy are based mainly on anglophone sources and thus fail to understand the internal currents and politics in France.[7] Although extensive research has been done on the origins of the League of Nations[8], and its history is not controversial – the major role played by the

[5] Jackson 2013, 2-5.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Blair, Scott G. (1992): *La France et le pacte de la Société des Nations : le rôle du gouvernement français dans l'élaboration du pacte de la Société des Nations, 1914-1919*. Doctoral thesis prepared in Université Paris I, Paris, 6-8.
[8] See for example Cooper, John Milton (2001): *Breaking the heart of the world: Woodrow Wilson and the fight for the League of Nations*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Goldstein, Erik (2002): *The*

Americans and the British is not contested – a problem arises from the fact that there has been an overrepresentation of the anglophone side and a neglect of the French, which has resulted in a skewed image of internationalism being a purely Anglo-American feature.[9] Recent exceptions to this trend are Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, who have tried to restore a more comprehensive image of internationalism in historiography. They argue that internationalism has suffered from undeserved linkage to idealism, which has led to its dismissal as irrelevant.[10] Traditional international relations studies have also neglected the French current of juridical internationalism, which is evidenced by its absence from the works of historiography in the field.[11] For example E. H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, one of the foundational texts of classical realism, ignored the French internationalists completely.[12] In reality, there existed an active community of League of Nations activists in France consisting of legal experts, politicians and academics, who were developing a particularly French view of internationalism with a strong base in law, sometimes called *paix par le droit* ('peace through law'). French strands of pacifist activism have been the subject of excellent studies by Jean-Michel Guieu and Carl Bouchard.[13] However, studies on the French plan of the League of Nations are scarcer. The works of Peter Jackson and Scott G. Blair[14] are rare exceptions of careful and insightful research into the French work at the Paris peace negotiations and the formulation of the juridical internationalist model. While Blair's doctoral thesis is the most comprehensive study on the French government's work in the creation of the League, his perspective is limited to analysing practical diplomacy and the role of the individual characters in the final outcome and fails to place the events in a wider societal and intellectual context. Jackson, on the other hand, shows great consideration of the

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First World War Peace Settlements, 1919-1925. Routledge, New York; Henig, Ruth B. (2010): *The League of Nations*. Haus Publishing, London; Macmillan, Margaret (2001): *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War.* John Murray, London.

[9] See for example Mazower, Mark (2009): *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations.* Princeton University Press, Princeton.

[10] Sluga 2013; Sluga and Clavin, 2017.

[11] See for example Schmidt, Brian (1998): *Political Discourses of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations.* State University of New York Press, Albany.

[12] Jackson 2013, 10.

[13] Bouchard, Carl (2006): Des citoyens français à la recherche de la paix durable (1914-1919), *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains.* Vol. 2, No. 222, 67-87; Bouchard, Carl (2008): *Le citoyen et l'ordre mondial (1914-1919) Le rêve d'une paix durable au lendemain de la Grande Guerre*. Editions A. Pedone, Paris; Guieu, Jean-Michel (2008): *Le rameau et le glaive. Les militants français pour la Société des Nations*. Presses de Sciences Po, Paris; Guieu, Jean-Michel (2006): Pour la paix par la Société Des Nations. La laborieuse organisation d'un mouvement français de soutien à la Société Des Nations (1915-1920), *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains, Vol.* 2, No. 222, 89-102.

[14] Jackson 2013; Blair 1992.

social, political and cultural context surrounding the policy formulation, but his analysis does not include a comparative analysis of the different conceptions from the point of view of realism. Compared to these two important studies, my study will offer a novel perspective by applying a new theoretical framework to the analysis of the juridical internationalist model. By applying the IR concepts of realism and idealism to the juridical internationalist conception, I will show that the French model represented a third way between the two traditional paradigms that combined elements of both.[15]

1.2 Theoretical background

The theoretical framework of this thesis revolves around the concepts of internationalism, realism and idealism. My argument is that the French vision of the League of Nations represented a form of internationalism that combined features of realist and idealist policies. This framework helps to understand the differences between the traditional realist power politics, Wilsonian idealism and juridical internationalism. Identifying juridical internationalism as its own distinct current broadens the image of internationalism in historiography and nuances the traditional oversimplified oppositional image that places realism against idealism. At the same time, the historical approach of this thesis allows for a critical look into the use of these terms in the period preceding the foundation of realism as a self-conscious school of thought and the way the value assessments linked to those terms have carried over to IR and continue to influence our perceptions today.

As Sluga has argued, internationalism has often been unreasonably labelled as idealism, a term that carries the negative connotations of utopianism and irrelevance. In traditional historiography, the utopian illusion linked to internationalism has led historians to focus their research on sovereign nation states. Meanwhile, nationalism is strongly linked to realism and has not suffered from the same kind of bad reputation as idealism, although both have utopian and realistic features.[16] Internationalism is often equated with its

[15] Jackson also uses the concept of realism in his analysis. However, he uses it in a different way by contrasting it with constructivism and focusing on debate of whether objective laws or norms guide policy decisions. Jackson 2013, 11-12.
[16] Sluga 2013, 165-166

pacifist and communist radical strands, which have been criticised as utopian illusions that could not exist in reality. As a result, internationalism has been pushed into the margins of the dominant political projects of liberal democracy and state sovereignty and made politically irrelevant. Although in recent years historical research on internationalism has increased, many misconceptions still remain. As Sluga and Clavin point out, the divide between realism and idealism in internationalism is not as clear as it has been made to seem.[17] It is this complex relationship between internationalism, realism and idealism that I intend to explore in this thesis.

At its most basic level 'internationalism' refers to a political idea that advocates deeper political and/or economic cooperation between nations and peoples of the world and emphasizes the importance of the common interests of states. Different currents of internationalism, such as liberal, socialist, conservative and pacifist internationalisms, differ in their views of what this cooperation should look like, but they all share this central idea.[18]

In this thesis, the terms 'realism' and 'idealism' have multiple definitions and meanings. In order not to confuse them, it is important to explain at the outset the different uses of these terms and how they relate to each other. In IR, realism refers to a theory that emphasizes the role of the state, national interest, military power and a belief that national interests trump moral and ethical considerations. Due to the absence of a supranational power, the international system is believed to have an anarchical character that forces states to act according to their self-interest and seek power at the expense of others. This constant need to maximise one's security makes conflict an inevitable feature of the international system.[19] In the case of idealism, providing a clear definition is more difficult. Although the term is frequently used in international politics, no commonly accepted meaning or even an idealist school of thought exists, as the concept originated as a term of disapprobation.[20] For the purposes of this thesis, idealism should be

[17] Sluga and Clavin 2017, 6-11.
[18] Sluga 2013, 1-9.
[19] For these classic propositions of realist theory see for example Morgenthau, Hans (1978): *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Alfred A Knopf, New York; Waltz, Kenneth (1979): *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill, Toronto.
[20] In *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, E. H. Carr attacks idealism by describing it as utopianism. Carr, Edward Hallet (2001): *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to Study International Relations*. Palgrave, New York (First edition in 1939).

understood as a political idea that emphasizes the belief that moral and ethical values outweigh national interests and that the system of international relations is capable of transforming into a more peaceful world order. Idealists believe that the old system of international relations that has led to wars could be fundamentally transformed when the 'international mind' and the ideas of peace and internationalism spread and overcome the prejudices and self-interests that stand in its way.[21]

Realism is a school of thought in IR theory that appeared as a self-conscious discipline after World War II and has largely dominated the field ever since. Realism is a coherent and comprehensive set of theories that provides an ontology and epistemology for the study of international relations. In other words, it presents an explanatory theory of how the international system works and how we can gain knowledge of it. In this world view, power politics is seen as a universal and inescapable law of international relations. Idealism, on the contrary, did not constitute a self-identified, coherent discipline. Rather, it is a term usually identified with certain theorists and policies in the 1920s, such as President Wilson and the League of Nations. The designation 'idealism' was given to it by its critics and thus carries a negative, derogatory connotation.[22] It is important to note that realism and idealism did not exist as academic disciplines at the time that is studied in this thesis. Therefore, the actors and authors mentioned did not use the terms in that sense. The terms realism and idealism did, however, exist. Only, they did not carry the meaning associated with these academic IR theories, but a more mundane meaning relating to the feasibility or possibility of something. This mundane definition associated realism with rationality, basing decisions on facts and 'reality' and the rejection of the impractical or visionary. Idealism, on the other hand, implied an overly optimistic attitude and belief in the best outcome that could sometimes be naive. It also carried the connotation of illusion, or an unreal and misleading conception that could be dangerous.

Woodrow Wilson and other internationalists were regularly challenged as idealists in the years leading up to the creation of the League of Nations, while supporters of more traditional power politics considered themselves realists. These same connotations are

[21] Bull, Hedley (1972): The Theory of International Politics 1919-1969. In: Linklater, Andrew (ed.) *International Relations. Critical concepts in political science. Volume I.* Routledge, New York and London, 57-59; Wilson, Peter (2003): *The International Theory of Leonard Woolf: A Study in Twentieth Century Idealism*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
[22] Bull 1972, 55-62.

also present in the IR theories of realism and idealism, which were born out of this political culture. When realism emerged as an academic discipline after World War II, the war was seen as proof that the League of Nations had failed. E. H. Carr considered Wilson's politics and his 'utopian' belief in the League of Nations as dangerous and deluded. Therefore, he sought to deprecate his policy by calling it 'idealist' and presented realism as a better option. Thus, when realism emerged as a self-identified discipline in 1940s, it was largely as a reaction to the politics of Wilson and other 'idealists', as they were called. They wanted to draw attention away from the idealist beliefs of international harmony to the 'realities' of the world, conflict and anarchy. Unlike the idealists who believed in the ever-advancing progress of humanity, realists argued that international politics functioned in recurrent patterns of conflict.[23]

Claiming that the politicians and authors living in 1919 were self-consciously implementing realist or idealist policies in the IR sense of the word would be anachronistic. We can, however, apply the terms analytically to a historical situation by identifying elements that are typical of realist or idealist thinking in the policies pursued or theorized by historical actors. Although realism did not emerge as a self-identified academic discipline until the mid-20th century, it has been widely recognised as an ancient tradition of political thought stretching back to Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. Therefore, in this thesis, I will analyse the politics and utterances of the main actors in the founding of the League of Nations with a view to identifying elements of realist or idealist logic in them.

The Wilsonian idea of the League is often referred to as the key example of idealism. Woodrow Wilson planned to reform the old system of diplomacy marked by secrecy and power politics and bring about a new order of democratic peace through the League of Nations. Famously announced in his Fourteen Points speech, Wilson wanted to replace the old balance of power politics with open diplomacy, national self-determination, disarmament, collective security and democracy. This would be achieved through the League of Nations, an organisation that would facilitate mediation of international disputes and open them for the judgement of popular opinion. President Wilson saw the League of Nations as a way of replacing 'force of arms' by 'force of opinion', where

[23] Ibid.

public opinion would guide the international system and sanctions would be enforced by the moral conscience of member states. For him, law was not a suitable basis for politics, because he saw it as a codification of circumstances that were changing all the time. According to Wilson, the organisation should reflect the 'collective aspirations of humanity' of any given moment.[24] In many ways, the American president relied on the morality of states and their voluntary choice of transforming the international system into a more peaceful one, rather than creating legal mechanisms that would force states to behave in a certain way. This idealist trust in the moral behaviour of states is what separated Wilson from the model advocated by the French delegation led by Bourgeois.

The French juridical internationalists advocated a more binding alliance, which would be based on a common legal system, global disarmament and the creation of a common international army that would ensure that the League of Nations would have real power and its decisions would be enforced. Rather than believing that states would be capable of living according to high standards of behaviour and honour their commitments to the League, the juridical internationalists envisaged a system where proper conduct would be codified into international law. The breaking of this law would lead to automatic sanctions enforced through military power if needed.[25] The French model was very internationalist, in the sense that it advocated a much deeper union of states than the Wilsonian model. Yet, it was also very realist because it did not rely on morality, but on tangible legal sanctions backed by preponderant military power. The French insistence on equipping the organisation with real armed forces sprang from the perceived threat of German demographic and economic superiority, which posed a constant threat to French security that could not be brushed aside in the peace negotiations.

This study will examine the debates on the League of Nations on the two different levels where it was discussed: the national French level and the international peace negotiations. There were two corresponding divisions with regard to ideology. First, on the national level in France, the major distinction was between those who were advocating traditional security measures based on power politics and those who believed in collective security guaranteed by the League. Both of these schools of thought had realist inclinations.

[24] Jackson 2013, 216, 265.
[25] Ibid., 68.

Second, on the international scene, the main confrontation in League matters was between the French juridical internationalist conception, which was based on the use of force and a legal framework, and the idealist version pushed by President Wilson and the British, which relied on the moral force of public opinion.

1.3 Methods and sources

In order to find out why the French juridical internationalist model failed at the Paris peace negotiations and was subsequently omitted from studies of internationalism and the League of Nations, this study will explore the formulation of the French policy in three different contexts: the French parliament, the French Interministerial Commission on the League of Nations (CIESDN) and the Paris Peace Conference.

Linguistic records provide an important means to study political acts, which is why the method of this thesis consists of a qualitative analysis of the debates in the French parliament and the Paris peace negotiations as well as the documents related to the work of the CIESDN. As Haapala, Palonen and Wiesner put it:

> As politics is mainly carried out by linguistic acts [– –], this dimension is crucial to its understanding. Scholars should therefore be sensitive to the processes and actions, strategies, intentions and speech acts that underlie the outcome of politics, when they analyse speeches and writings of persons involved in the studied contexts of politics.[26]

In this analysis, the debates and other written records are understood as political action that becomes intelligible only when placed in its historical context. Therefore, in this thesis, I will analyse texts intertextually by situating them in their historical context and discursive framework to gain an understanding of the speakers' intentions. As Quentin Skinner has argued:

> We need to situate the texts we study within such intellectual contexts and frameworks of discourse as enable us to recognise what their authors were *doing* in writing them. [...] it is simply to use the ordinary techniques of

[26] Haapala, Taru; Palonen, Kari and Wiesner, Claudia (2017): *Debates, Rhetoric and Political Action. Practices of Textual Interpretation and Analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 223-224.

> historical enquiry to grasp their concepts, to follow their distinctions, to recover their beliefs and, so far as possible, to see things their way.[27]

When studying historical texts, it is sometimes difficult to recover the original intentions of the speaker. This is because the expressions themselves in the context of their occurrence were such that the intention would have been clear to the audience. As we are not the intended audience, the intention will not be intelligible to us without gaining some knowledge of the context. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the strategies and intentions of the actors in different political processes rather than merely the contents of their speech. To understand what the writer was doing in writing something, we must start by elucidating the subject matter of the utterances in question and then place them in their argumentative context to understand how they relate to other utterances about the same subject matter. This means taking an utterance not as a simple proposition, but rather a move linked to a wider discussion and taking position in relation to a pre-existing argument. In this study, 'intentions' are understood in the way defined by Skinner. Skinner differentiates between 'intentions', which are public or political phenomena that reference to, for example, the political situation or a philosophical discussion, and 'motives', such as money, professional gain or hatred, which are personal incentives. Intentions are better suited for historical study and they reveal more relevant information on a theoretical level because they enable us to place the actors in relation to wider political and intellectual traditions.[28] This method allows placing Bourgeois and the juridical internationalists in relation to traditions of internationalism and pacifism, as well as ongoing societal discussions about peace and security.

The value of this method is to place us outside of our own assumptions and systems of belief and thus gain a more critical perspective of our own views of the international system. This thesis offers a historical perspective to the study of international relations. IR studies are often concerned with developing theories about world politics and the international system in an effort to explain how they work, often with the intention of providing normative guidelines for policy decisions. In contrast, my historical approach stresses the singularity of events and their location in time instead of seeing them as abstract and general theories. To understand the moment of foundation of the League of

[27] Skinner, Quentin (2002): *Visions of Politics. Volume I: Regarding method.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, vii.
[28] Ibid., 91-103, 112-116.

Nations and the moral considerations it gave rise to, it is important to grasp the complex political, moral, intellectual and social situation right after the First World War. It is also important to place it in its temporal sequence: identify the events from which it grew, the continuities with the past and elements of change that distinguish it from the past. Importantly, the historical approach offers critical insights into the theories of realism and idealism. Both theories were developed at a moment in history that had its own confines and preoccupations. The identification of these elements enables criticism and the challenging of the assumptions that guide the discussions on international politics today.[29]

As already mentioned, I have chosen three different contexts to study the political debates related to the founding of the League of Nations: the French parliament, the French Interministerial Commission on the League of Nations and the Paris Peace Conference. I came to choose these contexts for a number of reasons. Most importantly, there are written records available from all three. They also cover the national and international levels of discussion and the main scenes where the juridical internationalist model of the League was discussed. These records allow us to follow the formulation of the French proposal for the League of Nations through the different instances where it was discussed and get a comprehensive view of the process. All chapters of this thesis are structured in the same way. The first section of each chapter will contextualise the debates by illustrating the relevant political and intellectual evolutions that affected the intentions of the speakers. This contextualisation will then facilitate the analysis of the contents and dynamics of the debates in the second section. Finally, in a third section, I will enter into a more theoretical analysis, where I will apply the framework of realism to the policies discussed in the debates. Each chapter proceeds from the wider societal and superficial level towards a more specific and deeper level of analysis.

Each chapter also relies on a particular set of archival sources. The first chapter will examine records of the French parliament. Parliamentary debates present an important context of study for the question of the League of Nations because the Third Republic in France (1870-1940) was a golden age of parliament, which considerably influenced politics and featured many great orators well-known to the public. The First World War was a particularly interesting moment because of a power struggle between the parliament

[29] Bull 1972, 55-57.

and the executive over foreign and defence policy and significant tensions arising over questions of authority and publicity of information. Censorship was set up in 1914, which limited the parliament's possibility to discuss any peace conditions. As a result, the question of the League of Nations was not widely discussed in parliament, except for a few key moments. One such moment was early June 1917, when the parliament voted on France's goals in World War I. Those debates will be studied here. Parliamentary records have also been largely undervalued as a source material in historical research, even though they hold a clear causal link to political decision-making.[30] The parliament also provided a stage where the leading political figures from different sides of the political spectrum could discuss the League of Nations both publicly and in secret sessions, revealing the political cleavages that were hidden from the public eye. [31]

The second context I chose to study is the French Interministerial Commission on the League of Nations founded in July 1917. Presided by Léon Bourgeois, it was charged with the task of preparing a French plan for the League. The Commission consisted of political, legal, military and diplomatic experts who were specifically tasked by the French foreign ministry to formulate a detailed plan for the future organisation. It is where the concrete and detailed form of the French plan was created. The Bourgeois Papers held in the French foreign ministry's archives near Paris provide interesting insight into the work of this Commission and its president, Léon Bourgeois.[32] These documents allow for a study of how the detailed plan of the League came to be and of the thoughts and concerns of the main proponent of the juridical internationalist view.

The final set of records I have chosen are from the Paris Peace Conference negotiations in 1919. These include minutes of the Commission on the League of Nations, a special

[30] Ihalainen, Pasi and Palonen, Kari (2009): Parliamentary sources in the comparative study of conceptual history: methodological aspects and illustrations of a research proposal. *Parliaments, Estates & Representation*. Vol. 29, 17-34.
[31] Records of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate were published in the *Journal officiel de la République française,* available today in Gallica*,* the digital archives of the National library of France. Minutes of the secret parliamentary sessions of 1917 were published after the war, in 1925. Records of the Chamber of Deputies in Chambre des députés, Débats parlementaires, Journal officiel de la République française (hereafter Chambre, Débats, JO), Gallica, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF). Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb328020951/date.item (accessed 15 May 2020). Senate records in Débats parlementaires, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34363182v/date.item (accessed 15 May 2020).
[32] Papiers Léon Bourgeois, Vol. 16-18, Collection Papiers d'Agents - Archives privés (PA-AP), Archives du Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères (MAE), La Courneuve, France.

commission set up to draft the Covenant of the League, and the records of the plenary sessions where the adoption of the Covenant was discussed.[33] These documents show how the final negotiations proceeded and how the matter was discussed on the international scene.

These different sets of documents provide a comprehensive view of how the League of Nations was discussed by the French policy elite in different situations. The aim is not to examine all political discussions related to the founding of the League, but rather to focus on the members of the political elite who played a significant role in the matter. Therefore, for example, studying the pacifist and internationalist organisations and activists falls out of the parameters of this thesis. Nor is the point of this study to examine the different political parties' take on the question of the League of Nations. The focus of this thesis is mainly on France. Therefore, while the ideas of Wilson and Lord Robert Cecil of the British delegation are taken into account when relevant in the context of France, they are not analysed in greater depth. The timeframe of this study spans from June 1917 to the spring of 1919. These dates were chosen because in the summer of 1917 the founding the League of Nations became an official war aim of France and the CIESDN was founded to create a French plan for it. The end date, 1919, marks the year when the Paris peace negotiations were held and the Covenant of the League of Nations was adopted. Of course, the idea of a League of Nations predates this time period and debates on its form did not end when the Covenant was signed, but the time period I have chosen for this study covers the key moments of the formulation of the French plan.

This thesis is divided into three parts, each part concentrating on one of the aforementioned contexts of discussion. The first chapter covers the debates held in the French parliament in June 1917. In the second part, I will analyse the work of the CIESDN and its leader Léon Bourgeois in the years leading up to the Paris Peace Conference. The final chapter will concentrate on the international peace negotiations in the spring of 1919,

[33] Minutes of the Commission on the League of Nations in Miller, David Hunter (1928b): *The Drafting of the Covenant. Volume II.* G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York. Records of the Plenary Conferences in Minutes of the Plenary Sessions, Volume III: Preliminary Peace Conference, The Paris Peace Conference, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Office of the Historian (hereafter Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH).

when the plan devised in the CIESDN and defended by Bourgeois was finally overpowered by Wilson, Cecil and Clemenceau.

2. Debating the League of Nations in the French parliament

In June 1917, the French National Assembly held secret sessions where heated debates on the questions of war and peace took place. This chapter will examine those debates and how the League of Nations was spoken of in them.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the complex political environment in which the French policy elites operated and its effects on their attitudes. Analysis of the parliamentary debates allows for a view into the intentions and ideals of French politicians from different sides of the political spectrum and into the main concerns shaping their attitudes towards an international organisation of peace. The analysis of these discussions through the lenses of realism and idealism reveals what the orators deemed as possible and relevant and how this rhetoric was adopted to normalise power politics and disparage opposing views. We will see that although political leadership remained committed to traditional power politics, external and internal pressures forced the government to acknowledge the question of a league of nations. As a result, the French conception of internationalism began to emerge.

In an effort to better understand the political climate in which the question of the League was discussed, I will first explore the political context in France during the First World War. This offers the platform for the analysis of the debates in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in June 1917 in the second section. Finally, this analysis will be deepened by examining the rhetoric of the debates and considering the intentions of the different speakers through the lenses of realism and idealism.

2.1 Parliamentary debates set amid international and domestic uncertainty

In order to understand the intentions of the French deputies and senators, it is necessary first to place their debates in their context and situate their arguments in relation to

ongoing public debates. This first section will serve to illustrate the domestic and international political context that France found itself in June 1917 and set the scene for the parliamentary debates that will be studied in the following section. Internationally, there were developments in the military situation that forced the French to reconsider their alliances. Domestically, the vilification of Germany in French society had a significant impact on how peace and security were envisioned. Furthermore, a political crisis was brewing between the parliament's oppositional political forces and the government over questions of authority and foreign policy. All these contextual elements crucially affected the participants in the debate that will be analysed later.

The military situation in the spring of 1917 placed the French in an uncertain position towards their allies in the war. World War I was a devastating war for France, which suffered great damage to its economy, infrastructure and population. France was one of the countries that were most affected by the war, especially due to the devastating trench warfare on the Western front. By 1917, the war had been raging for three years and the French war effort was in decline, which made it dependent on Allied aid.[34] The spring of 1917 marked a turning point in the war and in French security policy. In March, the tsarist regime in Russia fell and was replaced by a provisional government. In April, the United States entered the war by declaring war against Germany. In France, the great *Chemin des Dames* military offensive failed, leading to a break in the army's war morale and wide-spread mutinies. The political turmoil in Russia and the entry of the United States into the war forced the French to reconsider their position, as the new Russian government was no longer backing up the traditional security vision that had been the basis of their alliance. France was considering turning away from Russia, which had been their traditional military ally for twenty-five years, and towards the United States. This would also mean that they would have to take into account one of the main aims of American President Wilson: the founding of the League of Nations.[35] At the time of the June parliamentary debates, it was not clear which way France should turn. There was a clear division between those – mostly socialists – who thought France should seek help from Russia, and those who preferred turning to the Americans.

[34] Jackson 2013, 133-134, 144.
[35] Blair 1992, 79-81.

France's main enemy Germany was widely vilified in public opinion. This had a significant effect on the ways that peace and security were envisaged in France. Since the invasion of France by German troops in September 1914, Germany was believed to threaten the existence of the French nation and accused of violations of international law, massacring civilians and having actively prepared and worked towards starting a war.[36] The crippling destruction caused by the Germans and the two countries' long and antagonistic history made the public opinion in France very hostile towards Germany. The roots of this strong resentment for the Germans can be traced back to France's decline from its position of economic and demographic superiority after the humiliating defeat they suffered in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, which had led to the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles and the loss of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.[37] In the French mind, full blame for World War I fell on the Germans, who were seen as having a completely different kind of mentality and an inherently aggressive character. This 'Prussian militarism' and German demographic and economic superiority was seen as a constant threat to French security and peace in Europe. For many, the German invasion of France had proved that German demographic and industrial superiority was unbearable for France and that a more favourable balance of power needed to be set after the war.[38]

Therefore, the central concern after the war for the French was how to deal with the Germans. There were two competing approaches: the traditionalist view that believed in alliance and power politics, and the internationalists. The traditionalists included many political and military leaders, who envisioned annexing the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine and breaking up Germany into several parts to establish a balance of power more favourable to France. The internationalists, on the other hand, advocated global cooperation based on law and the inclusion of Germany in the international system.[39] We can see these different opinions clashing in the parliamentary debates of June 1917. On the international scene, the internationalist cause had obtained a powerful advocate in Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States. In May 1916, in a speech held at a meeting of the League to Enforce Peace, Wilson had declared the creation of a league of

[36] Bouchard 2006, 72.
[37] Watson, David (2008): *Georges Clemenceau: France*. Haus, London, 5-9.
[38] Bloxham, Donald and Gerwarth, Robert (2011): *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 49-52; Jackson 2013, 281-284.
[39] Jackson 2013, 5-6.

nations at the end of the war as one of the United States' war aims. The American president was the first head of government to officially pronounce in favour of an international organisation of peace and his declaration was received with enthusiasm by internationalists all around Europe.[40]

Institutional evolutions concerning the power relation between the parliament and the executive also oriented the debates of June 1917. The Third Republic in France (1870-1940)[41] was a golden age of parliamentarism. This was a time when the society was democratising, becoming more republican and losing its old aristocratic ways. However, the distribution of power and influence over foreign and security policy during the war was complex, the First World War being a time of ambiguity in the authority of the parliament over the executive. Due to a lack of legislation specific to wartime needs, the institutions had to adapt to the changing situation pragmatically and by taking into account the constraints of war.[42]

Power was divided between four main actors: the President of the Republic, the premier and his Council of Ministers, military leadership and the parliament. Although in theory the parliament had supreme authority over foreign and defence policy, the extraordinary conditions of the war often forced it to the background. The President of the Republic, Raymond Poincaré, was technically responsible for the conduct of foreign policy with the Council of Ministers, but the parliament held the right of oversight over the executive and the power of ratification of all peace treaties and declarations of war. During the war, premiers had a tendency to concentrate power in their own hands. The premier and the foreign minister also had the right to withhold information from public discussion by justifying it with national security, which became a very important power during the war. In 1915, the Chamber and Senate decided to keep convening during wartime to exercise control over the government. However, parliamentary control over military affairs was often quite limited in practice, due to the state of siege that was declared in August 1914

[40] Henig 2010, 10.
[41] The institutional composition of the Third Republic was defined by constitutional laws laid down in 1875. The legislative branch of government was the parliament, or National Assembly, which consisted of a directly elected lower house, called the Chamber of Deputies, and an indirectly elected upper house, called the Senate. The President of the Republic served as head of state, while the President of the Council of Ministers ('premier') headed the government.
[42] Roussellier, Nicolas (2008): Le parlement français et la Première Guerre Mondiale, *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, Harmattan. Vol. 2, No. 10, 13-30.

by the Viviani government. It gave extended policing powers to military authorities, who also held important strategic power in planning military operations. It also set up censorship that prohibited all public discussion of peace conditions. This prevented any competing views of security from being discussed in parliament and allowed the government to proceed largely independently in the planning of post-war conditions.[43]

There were still two instances in the parliament where it was possible to discuss the war: the Army, Finance and Foreign Affairs Commissions[44] and the secret committees. The secret committees allowed the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate to convene in secret to discuss delicate issues that, if discussed in public, could have posed a risk to national security. This chapter will focus on secret sessions like this held in early June 1917. It should be noted that the secret committees were especially important because they held the political power of a vote of confidence in the government. With the process of interpellation they could bring entire cabinets down.[45] Parliamentary oversight exercised through these secret committees put the government in a difficult position where it had to balance between the necessary secrecy required by military operations and the demands from the members of parliament to exercise political control over security. Losing the confidence of the parliament could mean the fall of a government.[46]

In the parliamentary debates of June 1917, the division between different political parties on the question of the League of Nations was clear. During the war years, political leadership was dominated by the right wing, as patriotic politicians and military leaders had rallied wide support and taken important positions in the government. They were opposed by the socialists and the centrist radicals and republicans in parliament.[47] The

[43]Jackson 2013, 41-45; Roussellier 2008, 13-30.
[44] The parliament's foreign policy was usually formulated in six commissions: the Army, Foreign Affairs and Finance Commissions of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Commissions were a stage for open debates on foreign policy issues, but ministers had the final authority over matters arising from their department.
[45] Roussellier 2008, 23-24.
[46] For example, the Briand government that had taken over from Viviani in 1915 had to step down in March 1917 after its war minister Lyautey had refused to give information to the Chamber of Deputies. Assemblée Nationale: *La Troisième République (1870-1940). La première Guerre Mondiale.* http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/decouvrir-l-assemblee/histoire/histoire-de-l-assemblee-nationale/la-troisieme-republique-1870-1940#node_2093 (accessed 10 February 2020).
[47] Political parties in the modern sense (i.e. organised party structure or party discipline) did not exist in France yet. The political scene was divided into three general groups: the right wing (nationalists and clerical monarchists), the centre (moderate republicans, radical republicans and radical socialists) and the

right wing believed in traditional warfare, power politics and the dismantling of German power. This had largely been the policy of the Briand and Ribot governments, which was being questioned in the parliamentary debates of June 1917. To the traditionalist right wing, the fact that war had broken out was proof that internationalist pacifism had failed. They were opposed by the socialists of SFIO (*Section française de l'International ouvrière*), who were a considerable power in the lower house, but less so in the more conservative Senate. During the war, the socialist camp was divided, their opinions spanning from supporting the government's view of security to revolutionary internationalist workers' pacifism. The latter were in favour of a league of nations, but eventually envisaged the breaking down of the state-system and replacing the existing international order with the rise of international working classes.[48] Socialists were, however, united in thinking that France should not pursue any territorial annexations. Finally, the radicals[49] were a powerful political group in the parliament, but they were divided on the question of security. Some strongly advocated for a league of nations, while others called for the weakening of Germany.[50]

In spite of these significant differences over questions of foreign policy and peace existing in the parliament, opinions over the conduct of the war could not be publicly aired due to government censorship. It was feared that debates on war aims would endanger national cohesion or affect the morale of the troops in the frontlines. During the war, all official peace plans were based on assumptions of absolute victory. Negotiations were considered to be impossible with the fundamentally different aggressor Germany, whose war aim was to destroy France's position as a great power, annex its important industrial areas and impose harsh indemnities. The censorship prevented any competing views of security from being discussed. A political truce called *Union Sacrée* ('Sacred Union') was formed, in which the left-wing parties agreed not to oppose the government in the name of patriotism and the protection of war morale. The Union Sacrée put the parliament in a

left wing (socialists, trade unionists, anarchists). Bryce, Viscount James (2008): *Modern Democracies, In Two Volumes - Vol. I*. Cosimo, New York, 266.

[48] Most socialists' goals in the war consisted of preserving the French democratic political system against German autocracy, but also transforming international security. The SFIO had started calling for the establishment of a system of arbitration in international relations to replace the old alliance system.

[49] The radicals represented republicanism against conservative nationalism. Situated in the political centre, they were part of nearly all governments in the first decades of the twentieth century.

[50] Jackson 2013, 22-24, 122-130. The main advocates of juridical internationalism were radicals, such as Léon Bourgeois, but it had strong support among the centre-left and the centre-right and even socialists.

difficult position, where it had to exercise political control over the government, which meant having debates and airing out political divisions, while still appearing unanimous and committed to the common goal.[51]

In June 1917, the revelation of secret bartering of territory between the French government and tsarist Russia caused a political crisis in France. Russian socialists, who had taken power from the tsar, were calling for a 'peace without annexations', and published documents revealing secret plans of territorial exchanges between Russia and France.[52] These included French demands of the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine, the annexation of the valley of Saar, an important industrial and mining area, and the annexation or temporary occupation of the Left Bank of the Rhine to serve as a guarantee against German aggression.[53] In exchange, Russia would get a free hand in the organisation of its western frontier with the Central Powers. The agreement was conveyed by Russian socialists to French SFIO members that were visiting Russia in May 1917.[54] On top of this, another agreement had also come to light that included the United Kingdom and concerned the partition of the Ottoman empire between the signatory countries in the event of their victory. In this pact, it was agreed that Russia would get Constantinople and the Dardanelles, France would get Syria and Palestine, while the United Kingdom had claims in Iran. The leaks revealed a stark contrast between the official discourse of the government, which had been presenting France as the champion of rule of law and justice, and the imperialist chopping up of Europe and Asia Minor in annexations. This put the government of Alexandre Ribot in a difficult position with the socialists, who were accusing the government of secretly turning the war of liberation into a war of conquest and were now trying to get the premier to announce a clear position on French war aims.

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[51] Jackson 2013, 86-92; Bouchard 2006, 72; Roussellier 2008, 24.

[52] On 12 January 1917, the French premier Aristide Briand had sent a letter to Paul Cambon, French ambassador in London, containing instructions for a possible discussion with the British administration on French war aims. A copy of the letter had then been passed on to Gaston Doumergue, Minister of the Colonies, who was sent on a mission to Russia in February 1917 to discuss war aims with tsar Nikolai II. Their verbal agreement was put in writing through correspondence between French ambassador Paléologue and Russian foreign minister Nikolai Pokrovsky on 14 February 1917 and was later conveyed to members of the SFIO.

[53] 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917' [Minutes of the secret committee of 1 June 1917], 17 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6422748k.item (accessed 15 April 2020).

[54] Jackson 2013, 147.

To summarise, the decline in the French war effort and army mutinies combined with the uncertainty brought by the Russian revolution and the entry of the US into the war forced the French to reconsider their military alliances. A long-standing antagonistic relationship with Germany shaped the public opinion and the military and political leadership's attitudes towards the appropriate security measures to take. Domestically, politics were marked by censorship and appearing unified to the public, although underneath conflicts were brewing. The parliament was keen to take back some of its authority by questioning the actions of the government, which had taken extraordinary liberties in the conduct of foreign policy. A leak revealing the secret plans of the government sparked a political crisis between the government and the socialists. All these different elements of context are visible throughout the debates in the parliament in June 1917. They were often referred to by different deputies and representatives of the government, signifying that they were key concerns influencing their views on security and the League of Nations.

2.2 Secret parliamentary debates of June 1917: the League of Nations becomes a French war aim

With the scene now set for the secret parliamentary discussions that took place in June 1917, let us turn next to the actual content of those debates. In this section, I will analyse the dynamic of the debates between representatives of the government and the opposition and how they saw the League of Nations. What started as an interpellation related to the socialists' participation in an international peace conference escalated into a much wider discussion on the government's war aims. Topics of discussion ranged from national unity, the Russian revolution and the conduct of diplomacy to territorial guarantees against Germany and, finally, the League of Nations. The main dynamic was a confrontation between the Premiers Alexandre Ribot and Aristide Briand defending their actions against the socialists who accused them of imperialism. In an effort to keep the socialists on his side, Ribot finally declared in favour of a league of nations. This was also included in the final agenda of the Chamber of Deputies. Still, this was not a complete triumph of internationalism, as the Senate decided to endorse traditional security measures.

The reason behind the secret parliamentary sessions was an interpellation launched on 1 June 1917 by the radical deputy Le Bail-Magnan on the cabinet's actions. The interpellation concerned the attitude that the government was going to adopt towards the delegates to be sent to an international conference in Stockholm.[55] The conference, summoned by Russian socialists, was a gathering of European socialist parties – including those of Central Powers Germany and Austria-Hungary – to discuss a common peace programme. Premier Alexandre Ribot had denied passports to the delegation of SFIO members that had planned to attend the conference. The interpellation, which at the start concerned simply this question of granting passports, quickly escalated into a wider discussion on the war aims of France and the cabinet's conduct of foreign policy.

During the Third Republic, the Chamber of Deputies was very keen to exercise its right of oversight over the government through the process of interpellation. In this process, a deputy interrogated a minister on a policy he had been responsible for. This was followed by a speech denouncing the policy in question and a demand of explanations from the minister. In this case, it was Le Bail-Magnan questioning Premier Ribot. After a debate in the Chamber, opposing political groups would propose competing agendas praising or condemning the minister's actions.[56] If the agenda accepting the policy carried, the minister or cabinet was in the clear and could continue its work. If not, the interpellation could lead to the fall of the minister or the whole government, as had happened to the previous cabinet led by Aristide Briand. There were thus considerable pressures weighing on Premier Ribot to maintain the trust of the parliament when he explained his and the previous government's actions and disclosed his thoughts on the League of Nations.

The discussions in the parliament were marked by a considerable concern for the unity of the French people. Ribot clearly felt the risk of breaking French war morale or the dissolution of his cabinet if the parliament did not appear to support the executive's

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[55] 'Séance du 1er Juin 1917' [Minutes of the session of 1st June 1917], 1 June 1917, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6410851h?rk=21459;2# (accessed 15 April 2020).

[56] A motion would be made to pass an *ordre du jour*, or an agenda, which indicated the passing on to the next business on the list. The agenda could be either *pur et simple* or *motivé*. The *pur et simple* was a simple declaration without any praise or reproach of the minister. The *motivé* included a phrase of appraisal or condemnation of the acts of the government or the minister in question. Opposing political groups would propose competing agendas, which were then voted on. The government indicated which of the agendas it was disposed to accept. If that agenda carried, the minister or cabinet would be in the clear. Bryce 2008, 256-57.

actions. He therefore made several calls to the deputies to appear unanimous and united to the public. This allowed the government to quiet down the opposition, but on the other hand also put pressure on Ribot to keep the socialists on his side by making some concessions. On the first day of discussion, as the head of the government, Ribot opened the discussion to respond to the interpellation. He explained that his government did not support the socialists' participation in the Stockholm conference because proclaiming a peace before the end of the war could cause disorientation of the public opinion or the army. The French government's policy since the beginning of the war had always relied on a total victory over the Germans. Talks of any other kind of peace were strictly forbidden. Sending a socialist delegation to the conference was also interpreted as an attack on the government's authority, as it would look like the socialist party was assuming the role of the government in determining national policy. In addition, the fact that Germany and Austria-Hungary were allowed to participate in the negotiations was unacceptable to Ribot, as they were considered the ultimate enemy that was still occupying France and that could not be negotiated with. In the spirit of the Union Sacrée, however, Ribot quickly added that the patriotism of the French socialists was not questioned. The premier then addressed the concern over the recent leaks that had revealed secret annexation plans between France and tsarist Russia. He declared that in order to avoid troubling the public opinion, it was important to fight against the 'fake news' that were spreading and accusing France of being an aggressor in the war.[57]

Concern about national unity and war morale were strongly present in Ribot's speech and throughout the debate in different orators' discourses. It was a common talking point during the war all around Europe, where national political truces, such as the Union Sacrée in France, had been created in the name of preserving unity. At the time of these debates, the concern was even higher because the war had already been raging for three years, much of it in appalling conditions in the trenches of the Western front. The complete failure and horrible massacre of the *Chemin des Dames* offensive in April 1917 led to army mutinies in May of the same year.[58] Outside the frontlines, the civilian worker

[57] 'Séance du 1er Juin 1917', 1 June 1917, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[58] The gravity of these incidents is revealed by the fact that they were brought to discussion in the Chamber's debates. On 4 June, socialist deputy Pierre Laval read a letter dated 29 May 1917, which described the French army in revolt: 'Since yesterday morning, half of the strength of the three regiments that make up the 5th division, the 36th, the 74th, the 129th infantry, is in open rebellion. The army corps has refused to rise in the trenches, and neither the harangues nor the cries of the colonel [...] have been able to convince

population was also revolting due to their increasingly worsening salaries.[59] These rifts in national unity were felt in the parliament, especially by Premier Ribot who needed to keep the socialists on his side and in the Union Sacrée.

To the feeling of domestic uncertainty was added the unstable revolutionary situation in Russia. The Soviets' revelation of the hypocrisy of the Western powers and calls for a 'war without annexations' were taken up by socialists in France. SFIO members Marcel Cachin and Marius Moutet asked if they could present some documents and experiences from their recent visit to Russia, where they had been sent on a mission by the Ribot government. During this visit, they had obtained information about the territorial bartering with the tsar. As their presentation included some delicate observations that were not considered safe to share with the public, Cachin proposed that the matter be discussed in secret in order to safeguard national unity. The session was therefore moved to the secret committee of the Chamber of Deputies.[60]

In the secret committee that gathered the same day, Moutet and Cachin told the deputies about their experiences in revolutionary Russia.[61] The February Revolution had taken place in Russia some months earlier and had led to the fall of the tsar. A provisional government had been founded by the mostly liberal members of the Duma, but its authority was contested by the socialists of the Petrograd Soviet. While the Provisional Government had promised to stay in the war and maintain previous agreements, the socialists proclaimed a 'war without annexations and indemnities', refusing Russian annexations in the Ottoman empire.[62] Socialist minister Alexander Kerensky had become a dominant figure in the Provisional Government. As the war minister, he advocated strongly for staying in the war. Cachin and Moutet had been impressed by Kerensky and urged the premier to seek support in the war from the Russians, who according to them, had an army of ten million men ready to deploy. Cachin informed the Chamber that the Russians wished to renegotiate treaties and war aims that had been passed with the tsarist leadership. According to them, the new government had promised to continue the war on

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the soldiers of any orders.' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k64227490.item (accessed 15 April 2020).
[59] Jackson 2013, 143-144.
[60] 'Séance du 1er Juin 1917', 1 June 1917, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[61] 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 16 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k64227475.item (accessed 15 April 2020).
[62] Jackson 2013, 140-141.

the Allied side, provided that France renounced any conquests and agreed to fight a 'war of liberation'.[63] France was in a crucial moment in the war, having to decide whether to continue the war with its traditional ally, Russia, or turn towards the United States that was entering the war. The situation was very uncertain as conflicting information was coming out of Russia, which was in political turmoil. Many French socialists looked towards Russia with admiration, while the government remained more sceptical.

Their trip to Russia had also allowed Moutet and Cachin to obtain some critical information about the French government's dealings with the Russian tsar. They attacked the secret territorial agreements between the two states. The revelation together with the rise of socialism in Russia and the entry of the internationalist president Wilson into the war had raised the popularity of the Left that was now using its position of power to demand answers from the government. Cachin criticised the government's secret diplomacy that had kept the parliament in the dark and twisted the nature of the war into an imperialist conquest behind the people's back:

> The French, Russian and English armies are democratic armies. [...] You never told them, at any moment, that you would superpose to the war of liberation against German imperialism the dismemberment of such and such part of the world.[64]

Cachin was reproaching the fact that the war had been presented to the French people as a war of liberation against the German enemy but behind the people's backs, in secret agreements that had not been made public, the government had planned territorial annexations of conquered areas. The French socialists were demanding a more open culture in diplomacy where the people and other governments would be better informed of official war aims.

Old forms of secret diplomacy were starting to be widely recognised as one of the reasons that had led to the war, and they gained widespread criticism around the world. Replacing secret agreements with open diplomacy was also one of the main aims of President Wilson. To this end, the American president sent a note to all belligerent countries in

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[63] 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 17 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[64] 'L'armée française, l'armée russe, l'armée anglaise sont des armées démocratiques. [...] vous ne leur avez dit, à aucun moment, que vous superposeriez à la guerre de libération contre l'impérialisme allemand le dépècement de telle ou telle partie du monde.' Ibid.

December 1916, inviting them to share their war aims in an effort to open up a dialogue. Wilson suggested the League of Nations should be set as a common aim. Premier Briand's failure to send a clear answer to this note was also criticised by the socialist deputies in the June secret session.[65]

Craving for more clarity on the government's war aims, Cachin demanded that Briand, who had been premier at the time, clarify the conditions of the territorial deals that had been passed with tsarist Russia. Briand admitted that a deal in which Constantinople would be given to Russia in the event of an Allied victory had been signed. As for the French claims in Asia Minor, he tried to justify them by presenting France as a protector of Armenia and Syria against Turkish domination rather than a foreign invader. However, his main argument was that all agreements had been done out of necessity. To Briand, being the head of government meant that you were sometimes forced to make difficult but necessary decisions. 'We had to settle the spheres of influence of our country and we settled them,' he said.[66] According to Briand, the government was simply protecting French interests by getting a clear promise from the Allied governments on the most essential French war aim: the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine. From Briand's point of view, it had been necessary for the French government to agree with Britain, Russia and Italy on these questions in order to prevent discord from arising at the moment of peace negotiations. It had all been done in the interest of the French nation, and the government needed to have this freedom to negotiate deals with foreign powers in the future as well.[67]

Premiers Briand and Ribot were furiously attacked by the socialists, who had been inspired by the recent revolutionary actions of the Russians and their new democratic war aims. They believed they had revealed the dark side of the governing elites, selfishly carving up pieces of land, hidden from the public eye. Briand and Ribot were therefore eager to prove that nothing illegal or wrong had been done. They employed several tactics to achieve this. They claimed there was nothing out of the ordinary in these procedures

[65] French and British officials sent a common reply, which contained some Allied objectives, but expressed so vaguely that it could not serve as a basis for negotiations. Therefore, although a reply had been sent, it had not led to an open exchange on war aims between the belligerent countries as Wilson and the French socialists had hoped. Briand feared that Wilson would try to open peace negotiations, since he had declared to be in favour of a 'peace without victory', which was unacceptable to the French. Blair 1992, 47-51.
[66] 'Il a donc fallu régler les sphères d'influence de notre pays et nous les avons réglées.' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 17 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[67] Ibid.

and that they had been necessary to protect French interests. They tried to appear as if they had nothing to hide by revealing key documents and correspondence. They also sought to overturn the negative image of France as an imperialist aggressor by instead representing the French nation as the hero protecting the smaller peoples of Europe or the abstract concepts of justice and liberty against the barbaric enemy that was usually Germany. We can identify some of these tactics in Briand's arguments above, but they were also all present when Ribot addressed the question of the Rhineland.

Ribot explained, first of all, that there had not been any official agreement of annexing the Left Bank of the Rhine to France, but merely an exchange of views with the Allied governments in which the Rhineland had been envisaged as a guarantee against the risk of Germany rearming itself. Ribot clarified that they had proposed the possibilities of either establishing a neutral zone between the two countries or occupying the region temporarily. No detailed claim had been made, only a request that France, as the most concerned party, should have a preponderant voice on the matter. This exchange of views was apparently done to safeguard French interests. Furthermore, it did not have a definitive character, but could be modified following the circumstances of the war. These arguments served to establish the premier's actions as necessary and normal precautions that should not be considered as imperialist ambitions. Ribot also argued that they had to create some kind of guarantees against the 'perpetual menace' and 'dangerous, cruel, abominable despotism' of Germany that could crush France at any moment. Otherwise they would have been criticised of being improvident.[68] Later, when Ribot was defending these policies, he declared:

> We will not make a German peace, but a French peace, a peace that is created on the strong sentiment of the right of self-determination, a democratic peace, a durable peace, because it will be based on law and justice.[69]

Ribot was contrasting the barbarous despotism of Germany with the democratic and peace-loving France that was fighting for the noble cause of justice. Finally, to prove that he had nothing to hide, Ribot read aloud the letter that revealed the agreement between

[68] Ibid.
[69] 'Nous ne ferons pas la paix allemande, nous ferons la paix française, une paix fait du sentiment profond du droit des peuples, une paix démocratique, une paix durable, parce qu'elle sera fondée sur le droit et sur la justice.' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

the French government and the tsar.[70] Briand, who was premier at the time, claimed he had been aware of everything that had happened, and took responsibility for all actions. According to Ribot and Briand, nothing wrong or suspicious had been done. The only thing that could have been criticised was that the agreement's formulations were more rigid than had been intended due to some communication issues.[71] With the gesture of reading the supposedly discriminating document, Ribot tried to appear transparent and having nothing to hide. The tactics that Briand and Ribot used to justify their politics served to normalise power politics and distract their audience from their questionable moral implications.

The debate had already been going on for two days when the secret committee decided to reconvene on Monday, 4 June. This became the most intense day of debate, during which the socialists finally convinced Ribot to come out with a policy on the League of Nations. Premiers Briand and Ribot both expressed their views on French security and on whether it should be based on territorial guarantees or international cooperation. The pressure from the socialists finally pushed Ribot to declare in favour of a league of nations and to obtain the Chamber's acceptance for it.

It was socialist deputy Pierre Renaudel who pushed Briand and Ribot to talk about the League of Nations. Renaudel adamantly criticised the government's secrecy and insisted on the parliament's right to know its real intentions in the war. He called the government's Rhineland plan an 'annexation in disguise'. Renaudel himself believed peace would be best ensured by an international organisation rather than territorial guarantees: 'the peace of law, it is precisely not a territorial peace; the peace of law, it is the league of nations.'[72] In his view, it was better to have sanctions that were dependent on an international force rather than on one nation only, because history had shown that the latter could easily turn

[70] The letter that had been sent to the French ambassador in London, Paul Cambon, on 12 January 1917, also known as the 'Cambon letter'. A copy of this letter had later been given to Gaston Doumergue, who was sent on a mission to discuss the issue with the tsar in Russia. The French ambassador in Petrograd, Maurice Paléologue had then copied the letter adding his own preamble and had the document signed by the tsar and French officials.

[71] Paléologue had not received the government's comments on his preamble before getting the document signed, which was why its formulations were more rigid than had been intended. 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 17 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

[72] 'La paix du droit, ce n'est précisément pas la paix territoriale ; la paix du droit, c'est la société des nations,' Ibid.

into a conquest and lead to more violence.[73] Renaudel asked Ribot if he had abandoned international guarantees altogether, since they had not been mentioned by Ribot or Briand during the two days of debates and because Ribot had declared that the territorial claims could be withdrawn if need be. Renaudel pointed out to Ribot that 'if you do not get territorial guarantees [...] then it is no longer towards the Russian revolution you should turn, but towards Wilson and the League of Nations, the international organisation.'[74]

Both premiers had previously made vague statements about an international organisation of peace in their ministerial declarations. Ribot, for example, had stated in his declaration to the Chamber of Deputies on 21 March 1917 that peace would be best guaranteed if all nations were animated by 'the spirit of fraternity and liberty of the French revolution'.[75] Renaudel demanded that the government clarify these previous ambiguous declarations about the League of Nations and affirm a real policy in the matter.

Briand explained his vision of guarantees first. To him, there were two options: the first possibility, which he had presented in his ministerial declaration, was establishing guarantees through an international organisation equipped with sanctions. He added, however, that he doubted whether such an organisation would succeed in providing these guarantees, especially when it came to sanctions.[76] This scepticism on the effectiveness of sanctions had also been manifested in a note written in January 1917, in which Briand's government had stated that if a league was formed, it should have the 'necessary sanctions to execute its regulations to avoid that an apparent security does not end up facilitating new aggressions.'[77] This formulation shows that the Briand government's main concern was preventing future German attacks and that it was sceptical of the Wilsonian League of Nation's capability to meet this challenge. Therefore, Briand's preferred option was the territorial guarantees that the government had presented to Britain and Russia: temporary occupation or a neutral zone on the German border.[78] Briand added later that for an untroubled peace 'something other than just words is needed; France will not settle

[73] 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[74] 'Si vous n'apportez pas de garantie territoriale [...] ce n'est plus vers la révolution russe que vous devez vous tourner, c'est du côté de M. Wilson et la société des nations, de l'organisation internationale.' Ibid.
[75] Blair 1992, 83.
[76] 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[77] Blair 1992, 47-51.
[78] 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

for philosophical formulations,'[79] which was probably intended as a criticism of President Wilson's declarations on the League of Nations. All in all, Briand did not seem to give strong support to the Wilsonian idea of a peace organisation.

Ribot, on the other hand, claimed to share the same ideals as Wilson and laid out his vision of the League of Nations:

> What is needed is that all nations, and by this I mean the democratic nations, the nations that have arrived at a stage where they are the masters of their destinies, form what has on the other side [of the Atlantic] been called the League of Nations, to make the backward peoples, who would refuse to enter this League, respect, if needed by force, the laws of civilisation, the laws of modern peoples, as we define them.[80]

Ribot's conception of the League was an organisation of democratic and 'civilised' nations based on international law and equipped with armed forces. The form of the League envisaged by Ribot will be more closely examined in the following section. What is important to note at this point is that Ribot was clearly more supportive of the international organisation and President Wilson than Briand was, which indicates a shift in official policy.

Ribot's speech received applause from all sides of the Chamber. Confident that it would obtain unanimous approval, Ribot then proposed that an *ordre du jour* based on these principles be signed. Eleven different agendas were presented by different political groups and then read aloud to the Committee. Most of these agendas were sponsored by centre and right-wing deputies and made no mention of a league of nations. To allow for the hammering out of a compromise among the deputies, the session was suspended. Two more agendas were then presented, both containing a clause relating to a league of nations. One of them was the agenda signed by socialist pacifists Brizon, Raffin-Dugens and Alexandre-Blanc that envisioned a non-armed socialist league:

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[79] 'Elle voudra autre chose que les mots ; elle ne se contentera pas des formules philosophiques.' Ibid.
[80] 'Ce qu'il faut, c'est que toutes les nations, j'entends les nations démocratiques, les nations arrivées à un stage où elles sont maîtresses de leurs destinées, forment ce qu'on a appelé, de l'autre côté, la ligue des nations, pour faire respecter, au besoin par la force, par les peuples encore arriérés qui refuseraient d'entrer dans cette ligue, les droits de la civilisation, les droits modernes des peuples, tels que nous les définissons.' Ibid.

> [The Chamber] knows from history that war has never solved any national problems, and it plans to establish the liberty of peoples and the League of Nations not on arms, but on the progress of the Republic, democracy and socialism in Europe and in the world.[81]

The socialist agenda failed to gain wide support. The final agenda, sponsored by Lucien Dumont – but no doubt heavily influenced by Ribot –, was a compromise negotiated between all the major political groups and accepted by the cabinet. The Dumont agenda claimed that 'the aggression of imperialist Germany' had caused the war and featured the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine, fair reparations for damages and a league of nations as a guarantee of peace:

> [The Chamber] trusts that the effort of the armies of the Republic and the Allied powers will permit, after Prussian militarism has been beaten down, to obtain durable guarantees of peace and independence for the peoples, big and small, in an organisation of the League of Nations, being prepared as of now.[82]

An important point to note here is the mention of 'prepared as of now', which obligated the government to start the preparations for such an organisation immediately. Finally, the agenda also declared confidence in the 'Government to achieve these results through coordinated action of all the Allies,' which meant that Ribot could continue his work as head of the government. Most deputies then agreed to withdraw their agendas in the interest of appearing unanimous to the public.[83] Though the secret session had lasted late into Monday night, the Chamber decided to convene the public session straight away, starting the session at five minutes past midnight. Four agendas were presented: the ones sponsored by Dumont, Mistral, Brizon and a last one signed by Renaudel, Cachin and Moutet. Out of these four, only the one proposed by Mistral did not include a mention of a league of nations.[84] In Renaudel, Cachin and Moutet's formulation, the league of nations

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[81] '[La Chambre] sait, par l'histoire, que jamais la guerre n'a solutionné un seul problème national et elle compte, pour établir la liberté des peuples et la société des nations, non sur les armes, mais sur le progrès de la République, de la démocratie et du socialisme dans l'Europe et dans le monde.' Ibid.
[82] 'Elle compte que l'effort des armées de la République et des armées alliées permettra, le militarisme prussien abattu, d'obtenir des garanties durables de paix et d'indépendance pour les peuples, grands et petits, dans une organisation, dès maintenant préparée, de la société des nations.' Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] 'Séance du 5 Juin 1917' [Minutes of the session of 5 June 1917], 5 June 1917, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6410852x.item (accessed 15 April 2020).

would be based on law and have economic and military sanctions – a conception that corresponded largely with that of the juridical internationalists:

> [The Chamber] counts on the Government to formulate with its allies the principles of a society of nations, real guarantee of a durable peace, and to establish the rules and economic and military sanctions of an international legal organisation destined to protect the world from a new catastrophe.[85]

In the end, Renaudel sacrificed his agenda for the sake of unity and indicated his satisfaction with the fact that for the first time the Chamber of Deputies was signing an agenda with the affirmation that the government would explore the means to constitute a league of nations, which to him was the 'only real guarantee of a durable and organised peace.' A vote was then taken on the Dumont agenda, which carried 467 to 52.[86]

The fact that the Chamber of Deputies voted in favour of a league of nations was a significant win for the internationalists in the parliament. More importantly, Ribot's turn from defending only traditional territorial security measures to praising the international peace organisation indicated that even at the top echelons of French political leadership there were actors capable of considering other options than pure power politics. However, this internationalist spirit was not as triumphal in the Senate, which was populated by the more conservative voices of the parliament.

The agenda was discussed in the Senate the following day. Ribot recounted the discussion that had taken place in the Chamber and highlighted that the agenda had the support of a large majority of the deputies. The Senate convened in secret for two hours, after which an agenda, which made no mention of a league of nations, was voted on and accepted unanimously. The agenda affirmed the traditional tenets of French security policy – namely the will to continue the war until victory, the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine, reparations for damages, sanctions for crimes and guarantees against an offensive return

[85] 'Elle compte sur le Gouvernement pour formuler avec ses alliés les principes d'une société des nations, véritable garantie d'une paix durable, et pour qu'il recherche les règles et les sanctions économiques et militaires d'une organisation juridique internationale destinée à mettre le monde à l'abri d'une nouvelle catastrophe.' Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

of German militarism.[87] According to Blair, Léon Bourgeois and Premier Ribot tried to get a paragraph on the League inserted into the agenda. The effort was countered by Clemenceau – senator and ex-premier sceptical of the internationalist cause – who gathered a majority of senators to reject the insertion.[88] As we will see, this political manoeuvre was an augury of the key dynamic that would later define French policy on the League of Nations. The contrast between the two agendas that came out of the parliament was notable, as the Senate clearly relied only on the traditional security measures and punishing Germany, while the Chamber of Deputies affirmed the necessity of international cooperation.

The debates in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate in early June 1917 were marked by an overwhelming concern over national unity and winning the war. For the government fearing its own dissolution and a break in war morale, it was important to keep the socialists on its side. Moreover, there was the feeling of uncertainty that arose from the tumultuous revolutionary action in Russia and the mutinies and strikes at home. At the same time, the revelation of the government's secret bartering and the entry of the Americans led by the internationalist president Wilson into the war raised the popularity of the Left in France. The socialists, encouraged by their newly gained position of power, took it upon themselves to obtain answers from the government. Premier Ribot felt this pressure and finally declared in favour of a league of nations. The uncertainty of the continuity of Russian help and, consequently, the need to turn towards President Wilson undoubtedly influenced his decision as well.[89] Although the lower house voted in favour of an international organisation of peace, things turned out very differently in the Senate. The upper house lacked the political variety of the Chamber of Deputies, allowing for the conservative voices to hold on to their traditional view of security.

[87] 'Séance du 6 Juin 1917' [Minutes of the session of 6 June 1917], 6 June 1917, Débats, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6308159c.item (accessed 15 April 2020).
[88] Blair 1992, 102.
[89] Judging from the multiple references he made to the American president and the fact that he urged the Senate to agree that 'cooperating with Wilson was the future', Ribot clearly believed that, in the near future, France would have to rely on the help of the Americans rather than the Russians. 'Séance du 6 Juin 1917', 6 June 1917, Débats, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF.

2.3 An emergence of internationalism shadowed by realist power politics

To offer a better understanding of the government's attitude towards the League of Nations and internationalism and the consequences of the secret committee discussions, I will now turn to a more in-depth analysis of the debates. For this, I will first take a closer look at the conception of the League presented by the head of government, Premier Ribot. I will then offer a rhetorical analysis from the perspective of realism and idealism that will serve to reveal the political tactics of the governing elite and its positions on internationalism.

At the heart of the parliamentary discussions was the will to ensure French security against the threat posed by Germany. The secret territorial bartering had been done in the name of securing France's eastern border. The discussion on Russia centred on whether or not to turn to them for help in the war against Germany, and it was the fear of Germans that led to the key discussion on guarantees. On the question of guarantees, opinions were roughly divided into two camps: traditional territorial guarantees or guarantees ensured by an international organisation of peace. Up to this point, the government had mainly pursued the traditional guarantees, as manifested by the secret territorial deals and Briand's scepticism towards the League of Nations.[90] On the other end of the spectrum was President Wilson, whose main goal in the war was the establishment of a league of nations to ensure durable peace in the world. Between these two visions was Premier Ribot, who managed to retain a considerable degree of ambiguity in his policy on the League, even after the repeated demands of deputies for a clear formulation.

For a clearer understanding of the French government's official attitude towards the League of Nations at this point, I will next examine more closely the opinion of the head of government, Ribot. The premier's intentions concerning the League of Nations are difficult to discern because he defended ardently both the traditional security policies and the internationalist vision. As mentioned before, in his speech in the Chamber's secret session, Ribot presented a vision of the League as an organisation of democratic nations

[90] Briand would later become a strong advocate of internationalism and pacifism, but at this time was still an ardent defender of traditional security measures. Jackson 2013, 150.

based on the rule of law and backed up by the use of force. Although Ribot declared to share Wilson's ideals, in reality, their ideas of the international organisation differed on many points. Ribot emphasized on multiple occasions that only democratic nations that shared similar values could join the League:

> All nations that are not nations of prey, that do not live only in dreams of domination and imperialism, must unite, form vigorous leagues capable of imposing the respect for world peace through justice and liberty on nations that will have the misfortune of not joining.[91]

The notion that only democratic countries should be included in the League had been raised earlier by Wilson.[92] Although both Ribot and Wilson agreed that the conditionality of entry into the organisation had to be based on the nations' internal institutions, they understood it differently: for Wilson this meant that Germany would be democratised and included in the League. In his mind, the inclusion of Germany would in fact be vital in order to ensure the universality of the League and to prevent it from becoming a simple continuation of the Entente. For Ribot, on the other hand, Germany could either follow the Russian example and democratise through a revolution – which Ribot, however, did not consider imminent – , in which case it could be included in the League, or the Germans would be beaten militarily, which would not necessarily be followed by German entry into the League.[93] Whether or not to include Germany in the League was an important question because it would determine the nature of the organisation either as one directed against Germany or one including it as an equal member of the international community. Even though Ribot kept the possibility open for German admittance, he probably did not consider it very likely, judging by the hostile comments he made on Germany.

Wilson and Ribot also disagreed on when the League should be created. Wilson was prepared to open negotiations before the end of the war. This was unacceptable to Ribot, to whom peace negotiations could only be started after a total victory over Germany. This

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[91] 'Il faut que toutes les nations qui ne sont pas des nations de proie, qui ne vivent pas uniquement dans des rêves de domination et d'impérialisme, s'unissent, forment des ligues vigoureuses, capables d'imposer aux nations, qui par leur malheur se tiendront en dehors, le respect de la paix dans le monde par la justice et la liberté.' 'Séance du 6 Juin 1917', 6 June 1917, Débats, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[92] In fact, Ribot had sent a mission to the United States in May 1917, a month before the secret committee sessions, and obtained this information about the American president's attitude towards the League. Blair 1992, 84-90.
[93] Ibid., 89-90.

was specified in the Dumont agenda, which stipulated that the organisation could not be formed before the 'destruction of Prussian militarism', in other words, after an Allied victory over Germany. Even though Wilson and socialists around the world were advocating the opening of peace talks before the end of the war, Ribot stayed true to the French government's policy of total victory and unwilling to consider other options. For President Wilson, whose main goal was to create a truly universal peace organisation, opening negotiations before victory would have allowed for a dynamic of equals rather than the winners against the losers. Therefore, even though Ribot made it seem that he and Wilson were on the same page, advocating a league of democratic nations, there were in fact major differences in their conceptions regarding the composition of the League and the timing of its foundation. Wilson was clearly aiming to create a universal organisation open to all nations, whereas Ribot's priorities lay in defeating Germany and possibly leaving it out of the international society completely.

Ribot's attitude towards a league of nations is also difficult to grasp because up to this point, it had seemed that the government's official war aims only included territorial guarantees. Ribot appeared somewhat inconsistent in his opinions and actions. In the letters communicated by the French government to the British and Russian officials, a league of nations was never mentioned. At least this was what Ribot had told the parliament. According to Blair, when Ribot read aloud the Cambon letter to the Chamber, he actually left out a paragraph of the letter that included a vision of a league of nations.[94] This paragraph would have contained the mention that the Allied powers should unite and 'form a permanent association of force capable of commanding respect.'[95] The fact that Ribot lied to the deputies would indicate that he did not want to bring up the question in the Chamber, probably fearing push back from some group. Blair has put forward the hypothesis that Ribot wanted to remain ambiguous because he estimated that the conception of the League as an 'association of force,' would not be 'Wilsonian enough' for the socialists.[96] This seems unlikely though, as there was strong popular support in France for international military forces[97] and there were also socialists, such as Renaudel, who were sceptical of Wilson and that envisioned a league with military sanctions.

[94] Ibid., 94.
[95] 'Constituer d'une façon permanente une association de force qui se ferait respecter par elle-même.' Ibid., 58.
[96] Ibid., 94.
[97] Bouchard 2006, 73-74.

Furthermore, in the vision that Ribot finally presented to the Chamber, the League had armed forces. Ribot's reluctance to bring up the League is manifested also by the fact that he did not mention the League until he was pressured into it during the third day of debates. In the end, however, Ribot seemed confident in his declaration in favour of a league of nations and it did not cause any major protestations among the deputies. On the contrary, the premier received applause from all sides of the Chamber.[98]

Compared to my interpretation, Jackson has argued that Ribot was more clearly in favour of a league of nations and the democratisation of Germany and more hesitant about territorial guarantees and the Left Bank of the Rhine. According to Jackson, Ribot would have defended the territorial plans reluctantly because he needed to show support to the previous government's policies. According to Jackson's interpretation, Ribot would in fact have considered the democratisation of Germany as the best guarantee of peace and included Germany in the League.[99] In my view, while Ribot somewhat reluctantly defended the previous government's policies when it came to the secret territorial deals, he also believed in the possibility of some sort of territorial guarantee arrangement in the Left Bank. Ribot stated that the Doumergue agreement, which presented the return of Alsace-Lorraine and territorial annexations in the Left Bank as French peace conditions, was of a 'rigidity that did not express at all the intentions of the government'[100] but that this was the only aspect that merited criticism. Thus, he was not questioning the principles of the government's actions, but rather the formulation that erased some of France's diplomatic flexibility in the matter. In fact, he also defended the government's actions quite ardently: 'We admit it wholeheartedly and openly, it is French policy [...] We acted as Frenchmen and as patriots, although some may blame us.'[101] The many disparaging comments Ribot made on German barbarism also lead one to think that Ribot was not quite as optimistic about German democratisation as Jackson has proposed. Ribot stated on 2 June 1917 that to him the best guarantee would be to not have an autocratic and armed nation as a neighbour, but that that depended on the Germans, not France. He hoped that the revolutionary spirit of Russia would spread to Germany and lead to its

[98] 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[99] Jackson 2013, 153-155.
[100] 'C'était d'une rigidité qui n'était pas du tout dans les intentions du Gouvernement.' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 17 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[101] 'Nous l'avouons très hautement, c'est une politique française. [...] Nous avons agi en Français et en patriotes, nous blâme qui voudra.' Ibid.

democratisation. In the meantime, however, he did not think the French government could just stand and wait.[102] In my view, Ribot might have wished for the democratisation of Germany, but he did not count on it as a solution and he did not rule out territorial guarantees. The notion that Ribot would have included Germany in the League also seems unlikely given his statement declaring that the league of peace would be formed by countries that had fought the war together.[103] Furthermore, Ribot also accused the German socialists of being the Kaiser's accomplices in crimes against humanity and civilisation, and he called the notion that a union based on socialism and democracy could stop wars an 'illusion'.[104]

Ribot's position towards territorial guarantees remained equally unclear. He told the Senate that he did not believe in annexations, but that a neutral zone or temporary occupation of the Rhineland could be considered at a later stage. He added that the best guarantee would be 'the constitution of a Europe where all nations can determine their own fate and where they do not depend on the will of one man to unchain such evils on the whole of humanity.'[105] An obscure formulation possibly referring to a league of nations, the democratisation of Germany or the right of self-determination of peoples proclaimed by Wilson. Even the Dumont agenda left room for interpretation on the question. Territorial guarantees had been the only policy the government had pursued up until this debate, but in the final agenda there was no mention of territorial guarantees or sanctions against Germany. On the other hand, the formulation of the text did not exclude the possibility of searching territorial guarantees in addition to the international ones. Also, despite his grandiose-sounding declarations of changing international relations, Ribot's plan of the peace organisation would introduce fairly minimal changes to the status quo. The way that Ribot envisaged the League, as a society of democratic nations excluding Germany that could use force to make other countries respect their rules, almost comes down to a simple continuation of the military alliance of the Entente. This was more clearly expressed in his speech to the Senate following the Chamber discussion, when he said:

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[102] Ibid.
[103] 'Séance du 6 Juin 1917', 6 June 1917, Débats, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[104] Ibid.
[105] 'La meilleure garantie sera dans la constitution d'une Europe où toutes les nations s'appartiennent à elles-mêmes, où elles ne dépendent pas de la volonté d'un seul homme de déchaîner de pareils maux sur l'humanité toute entière.' Ibid.

> where *the league of nations today in arms could tomorrow be a league of peace*, provided that all the nations that enter it are animated by the same spirit of justice and liberty that France has had, for her part, the honour of introducing to the world through our immortal Revolution.[106]

It is important to note that the latter part of this statement also echoes his ministerial declaration, where he talked of 'nations sharing the spirit of the French Revolution', instead of developing a more concrete idea of the organisation. Despite this ambiguity, Ribot was still more supportive of a league of nations than previous governments had been, and by maintaining this vagueness in his policy, Ribot allowed everyone to see in it what they wanted.

Ribot, who only pronounced in favour of a league of nations when pressured and kept his statements vague, maintained a certain distance towards the idea of an international organisation of peace. Nonetheless, the fact that the head of government had to talk about the issue at all and did indeed declare himself in favour it, was a significant change in official foreign policy, which had so far been strictly based on realist power politics. It also shows that French political leadership was not only inhabited by figures calling for a crippling punishment of Germany, as traditional historiography has often presented the situation.

To offer a better understanding of the politicians' attitudes towards internationalism and security, I will now turn to a rhetorical analysis of the debates and apply the concepts of realism and idealism in IR theory. As mentioned in the introduction, although realism did not become an academic discipline until the mid-20th century, it has existed as a political tradition and has often been seen as going back to Ancient times. Therefore, while the French political elites of the World War I period were not self-conscious realists and the logic of realism did not exist as the coherent theory it is today, they can still be seen as influenced by this political tradition, acting and justifying their actions in the logic of realism.

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[106] 'Où la ligue des nations aujourd'hui en armes pourra être demain une ligue de la paix, à condition que toutes les nations qui y entrent soient animées du même esprit de justice et de liberté que la France a eu, pour sa part, l'honneur d'introduire dans le monde par notre immortelle Révolution.' Ibid. Emphasis added.

One way of looking at realism in the parliamentary debates is to consider it from the point of view of rhetoric. Rhetoric is important in the parliamentary context because speech is a central action in the parliament. It is governed by specific rules and contracts, especially the culture of speaking for and against something. In the secret sessions of June 1917, we can identify such confrontational settings between the premiers and the socialists, the traditionalists and the internationalists and between policies that were deemed as realist or idealist. Analysing parliamentary speech is also about analysing the rhetoric because, in politics, appealing to truth or reason does not always win the day. Often knowledge is not enough to provide one correct answer in politics. Rather, there are multiple possible options, and the solution comes from converting a majority to support one of them. Rhetoric is about persuasion, getting others to see things your way to win a majority over to your side. Parliamentary speech should be understood as an action aimed to persuade the opposing view.[107] Thus, the speeches made by Premiers Ribot and Briand, the socialists or other deputies in the debates of June 1917 were meant to persuade the opposition to see the matter their way. Ribot was seeking to convince a majority of the deputies to put their trust in him and his policies, while he was being opposed by socialists trying to discredit him and the actions of previous governments. Although there is an assumption of rationality implicit is realist logic, in politics relying on reason does not always ensure victory. Therefore, the rhetoric of realism that Ribot and Briand used to convince their audience did not rely solely on rationality, but also on emotions and morality.

The starting point of this analysis is the understanding of realism as not only a theory explaining how foreign relations work, but also as a rhetoric that has an effect on the world regardless of the veracity of its claims. Regardless of whether or not realism succeeds in correctly analysing the functioning of international relations, it can be powerful as a rhetorical tool and convince political actors to adopt its logic. Realism explicates the structures around us, but also influences them by affecting the relationships between the actors and subjects of international politics.[108] Ribot and Briand used the

[107] Palonen, Kari (2012): *Parlamentarismi retorisena politiikkana*. Vastapaino, Jyväskylä, 237-239.
[108] Beer, Francis and Hariman, Robert (1996): *Post-realism: The rhetorical turn in international relations*. Michigan State University press, East Lansing, 10-11.

logic of realism to affect the judgement of the deputies in the parliament and to win them over to their side.

Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman talk about realism as a persuasive discourse that relies on stories about the world and about itself. The persuasive power of realism comes from a clear and universal narrative that seems to explain the complex international environment. The narrative goes something like this: nation-states that have the monopoly of violence are the primary actors in international politics. Due to the lack of a supranational authority, they exist in a state of anarchy and insecurity. Therefore, states conduct their foreign policy in a way that increases their material and military power to assure their security. Political decision-makers calculate the effects of their policies on national interest in terms of power and resort to the most appropriate means, including violence, to achieve the best results. The world is essentially the stage of an international fight for survival where every state has to look out for itself. Realism's persuasiveness is increased by its claims of universality and rationality. The selfish behaviour of states is presented as inherent in human nature, and every state's actions are based on rational calculations and 'seeing the world as it is', rather than how it should be.[109] The traditional security policy in France was based on these assumptions: war and the pursuit of power were seen as essential features of international relations. It followed that France was in permanent competition with Germany and therefore France's security depended on its military and economic superiority and a strong network of allies.

We can see the use of classical realist logic in the rhetoric of the debates in the Chamber of Deputies. For example, when Ribot and Briand were defending the government's secret territorial annexation plans, their argumentation leaned heavily on the realist conception of international relations as balance of power politics. Briand, for example, explained his decisions as premier by presenting the situation in terms of balance of power:

> The responsibilities that the events of each day impose on the Government force it […] to take precautions and obtain guarantees […] It was, therefore, Gentlemen, necessary to maintain a persistent balance of alliances.[110]

[109] Ibid., 2-5.
[110] 'Les responsabilités que les évènements de chaque jour font peser sur ce Gouvernement, l'obligent […] à prendre des précautions et des garanties. […] C'est, par conséquent, messieurs, dans un équilibre

The main powers in Europe were dividing territory between themselves, each trying to achieve a favourable balance of power. Each nation tried to maintain its great power status and avoid any other nation becoming strong enough to threaten it. Each joined alliances that placed it in a strategically stronger position. For France, the question was tightly linked to Germany and assuring that the balance of power was especially unfavourable to the German neighbour, in order to prevent them from attacking France again. This was the main dynamic behind the question of territorial guarantees in the Rhineland. Conquering large swathes of important industrial territories from Germany would have helped to tip the balance of power in favour of France.[111] Classical realism is based on the assumption that all states, in order to ensure their own security, have to act in a selfish way and try to increase their power at the expense of others. This is clearly visible in the French policy towards Germany: they aimed to make Germany weaker in order to secure their own position. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, there was widespread vilification of the Germans in France and it was believed that they threatened the existence of the French nation. The war against Germany was thus often seen as a fight for survival and Germans were believed to be bellicose and aggressive by their nature, which corresponds with the realist conception of the fundamentally selfish human nature.

The rhetoric of realism was also used to discredit the opposing view by painting it as idealist. For example, there were moments in the discussions when socialist or pacifist internationalism was deemed illusory or idealist. The disparagement of internationalism as idealism contains the supposition that it is illusory, not based on reality, but rather a hopeful expectation of how things should be. In his speech to the senators, Ribot blamed the European socialists' 'illusions' for the outbreak of the war:

> On the eve of the war, the [Socialist] International did not come together to stop it. Yet, we lived in this *illusion* that the union of democratic and socialist orders would render any war waged against law and justice impossible.[112]

persistant des alliances qu'il a fallu se maintenir.' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

[111] Jackson 2013, 48-49.

[112] 'A la veille de la guerre, l'Internationale ne s'était pas réuni pour l'empêcher. Pourtant on vivait dans cette illusion que l'union des ordres démocratiques et socialistes rendrait impossible toute guerre entreprise contre le droit et la justice.' 'Séance du 6 Juin 1917', 6 June 1917, Débats, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF. Emphasis added.

This interpretation was common within the right wing, to whom the war breaking out had proved that internationalist pacifist plans were nonsense.[113] Germany's complete disrespect of international law had discredited the internationalists' 'peace through law' plan, and they were accused of 'dangerous idealism'.[114] Realism functions here as an ontology: only realists see the world as it is and understand how it works. Since in the realist logic the world operates as a competition for power between states who base their actions on rational calculations rather than moral concerns, it follows that interpretations that are based on other assumptions are bound to lead to errors or dangerous failures in foreign policy.[115] As discussed in the introduction, during the First World War, the terms 'realism' and 'idealism' were not yet used in the IR sense of the words. However, politicians of the time regularly used the terms to characterise their actions or those of their competitors. It is from this political culture that those terms were borrowed to IR theory. As a result, this pejorative sense of the word idealism was carried over to the political ideology.

Another theme often mentioned as the central difference between realism and idealism is the understanding of morality and how it guides the actions of states. Typically, realists assume that states' self-interest trumps moral considerations, while idealists tend to rely on the capacity of morality to instruct states' behaviour. Premiers Briand and Ribot, on the other hand, used the rhetoric of morality to justify their realist policies.

The rhetoric of morality was very present in the parliamentary debates. The government often justified its actions with ethical arguments. To create support for a total war, the government had constructed a discourse that was based on highlighting oppositions between France and Germany. France was framed as a champion of justice and civilization on a crusade against a brutal and tyrannical Germany.[116] This discourse was utilized by Briand and Ribot on multiple occasions. For example, Ribot presented the war as a fight for the survival of the French culture and indeed the whole of human civilization:

[113] Jackson 2013, 90.
[114] Ibid., 126.
[115] Beer and Hariman 1996, 6.
[116] Jackson 2013, 79-83.

> […] crime that has been committed not only against Belgium, against France and all the Allies, but arguably, against humanity and civilisation themselves.[117]

In official discourse, French war aims were always linked to the spread of justice and rule of law:[118]

> Yes, we lamented under the oppression of this policy forty-five years ago[119], and the revenge we want to take today is not the revenge of oppression, it is the revenge that consists of transforming the French ideas of justice, of liberty and equilibrium into the right of self-determination of peoples.[120]

Sometimes this was amplified by referring to the Revolution, which illustrated France's historic role as the purveyor of liberty, democracy and justice:

> All the nations that enter it [the League of Nations] are animated by the same spirit of justice and liberty that France has had, for her part, the honour of introducing to the world through our immortal Revolution.[121]

This kind of rhetoric served to glorify and justify the government's actions in the war and to continue to fight until total victory, because the situation was presented as a simplified Manichean fight between good and evil, or the virtuous France and the tyrannical Germany that threatened the existence of human civilisation.[122]

This rhetoric was also present when Briand and Ribot responded to the socialists' accusation of imperialist intentions in the Ottoman territories by claiming France was there to protect the weaker peoples and their right of self-determination. Briand justified

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[117] '[...] crime qui a été commis non pas seulement contre la Belgique, contre la France et contre tous les alliés, mais je puis dire contre l'humanité et la civilisation elles-mêmes.' 'Séance du 6 Juin 1917', 6 June 1917, Débats, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[118] Jackson 2013, 80.
[119] Reference to the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany in 1871.
[120] Ribot addressing the Chamber on 5 June 1917. 'Oui, nous avons gémi sous l'oppression de cette politique il y a quarante-cinq ans, et la revanche que nous voulons prendre aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas la revanche d'oppression, c'est la revanche qui consiste à traduire dans le droit des peuples les idées de justice, de liberté et d'équilibre qui sont celles de la France.' 'Séance du 5 Juin 1917', 5 June 1917, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[121] Ribot addressing the Senate on 6 June 1917. 'Toutes les nations qui y entrent soient animées du même esprit de justice et de liberté que la France a eu, pour sa part, l'honneur d'introduire dans le monde par notre immortelle Révolution.' 'Séance du 6 Juin 1917', 6 June 1917, Débats, Sénat, JO, Gallica, BNF.
[122] Jackson 2013, 80-83.

France's meddling in Asia minor by presenting it as a mission to protect smaller nations that were threatened by the tyranny of the Turks and the Germans:

> Do you believe that Armenia or Syria were in a good situation under Turkish domination and desirous to remain that way? [...] Do you believe that in this war, in which Syrian men, women and children have been massacred or have suffered the worst of torture with the approval and help of Germany, do you believe that these peoples could accept that countries like France or England would lose interest in their future?[123]

Similar rhetoric was also used by Ribot in the context of Alsace-Lorraine, whose residents were described as victims of German barbarism:

> Alsace-Lorraine is our heritage and our still bleeding flesh, which we do not wish to leave in the hands of the barbarians who tore it from us in 1870 with force and violence.[124]

Alsace-Lorraine had a complicated history as a region torn between France and Germany, inhabited by people whose national identity reflected that history. Briand and Ribot, however, tended to present the Alsatians and Lorrainians as French to justify the annexation of the region to France under the guise of self-determination, which was one of the central themes promoted by President Wilson. Instead of seeing the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine as an imperialist land grab, it was presented as freeing the Alsatians and Lorrainians from German oppression and returning them to their fatherland.

What is interesting in this rhetoric is that the French were not relying solely on rationality in the justification of their realist policies, but also resorted to moral arguments. They used the kind of arguments that realists often criticised as the weakness of idealism. It was the idealist belief in states' moral behaviour that was seen as misguided, because in realist theory states' actions are guided principally by their selfish interests and the necessity to overcome the security dilemma. However, there was a crucial difference in

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[123] 'Croyez-vous que l'Arménie, croyez-vous que la Syrie étaient en bonne situation sous la domination turque et désireuses d'y rester? [...] Croyez-vous que dans cette guerre où les Syriens, hommes, femmes, enfants ont été massacrés, ou ont subi les pires tortures avec l'assentiment et l'aide de l'Allemagne, croyez-vous que ces peuples pouvaient admettre que des pays comme la France, l'Angleterre, se désintéressent de leur avenir?' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 17 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

[124] 'L'Alsace-Lorraine qui est notre patrimoine, qui est notre chair encore saignante, que nous voulons pas laisser aux mains des barbares qui nous l'ont arrachée en 1870 par la force et la par la violence.' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

intention: whereas idealist policies were motivated by a true belief in moral action, realist policies arose from power calculations and the ethical argument was merely added as a justification. Therefore, Ribot and Briand's realist politics did not rely on the belief that other states acted morally. While the official discourse presented France as acting in a moral way, fighting a war of liberation motivated by the will to spread justice and liberty and protect the weak, in reality, it was pursuing a realist and expansionist foreign policy that contradicted the moral discourse. In the end, it was this contradiction that was the cause of the political crisis that erupted with the revelation of the secret territorial plans and the hypocrisy and dishonesty of the government.

As noted in the previous section, Ribot and Briand also used a rhetoric that normalised power politics. They painted realist policies as necessary, inevitable or prudent – the pragmatic thing to do when considering the 'realities' of the world, or, to put it in different terms, the rational thing to do when considering the calculations based on the variables of the international environment. This kind of rhetoric served to normalise these policies and make them seem acceptable and justified. The rhetoric that painted acquiring territorial gains at the expense of your enemy as sensible and necessary resulted in normalising such behaviour and dismissing the moral considerations of these policies. While the carving up of territory by the Great Powers can be seen as contrary to the ideals of democratisation and self-determination that were preached by the French government, Briand and Ribot managed to make it seem normal and irreproachable and distract their audiences from the hypocrisy of their politics.

In addition to socialist internationalism, deputies also criticised Wilson's ideas. While the former was mainly criticised for its utopianism, President Wilson's internationalism was judged for its abstract character.[125] When Briand noted that for successful peace 'something other than just words is needed, France will not settle for philosophical formulations,' Renaudel shouted in response: 'You need to tell that to President Wilson, to the United States!'[126] This interesting little exchange reveals important things about the speakers' attitudes. In my interpretation, Briand and Renaudel were both criticising

[125] It must be pointed out, however, that during the debates Wilson was also on several occasions referred to in a positive sense, as the hero opposing traditional harmful power politics.
[126] 'C'est au président Wilson, c'est aux Etats-Unis que vous devez dire cela!' 'Comité secret du 1er Juin 1917', 19 May 1925, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

Wilson's conception of the League of Nations and specifically its lack of concreteness.[127] At this time, Wilson had not declared any detailed plan of the League. He believed that it was premature to contemplate the details of the organisation, as it could have led to discord and fighting among the member states. Instead, he hoped that the arrangements and guarantees created between the Allies during the war would eventually evolve into a sort of league of nations.[128] Wilson's blind trust in the natural evolution of international relations into a peace-protecting league seems very idealist, as it relies on the assumption that states would naturally pursue the transformation of international relations into a more peaceful direction. It assumes that states would choose to act ethically, in favour of the greater good, rather than pursuing their own interests.

I believe that behind Briand and Renaudel's criticism of Wilson's lack of a detailed plan was the fact that juridical internationalism was gaining ground in France, which influenced their conception of the League of Nations. Even though Briand and Renaudel did not share a common vision of the League, they did share the opinion that it needed to be based on something concrete, anchored in the 'real' world and equipped with force. These qualities were characteristic of the specifically French current of internationalism that I have chosen to call juridical internationalism[129]. In part, this sprang from the fear of a German attack, which was the central concern of French security policy. The threat to national survival felt imminent to the French and pushed them to favour concrete military measures. This is evidenced by the popularity of the right wing and its harsh policies towards Germany, but also in the attitudes of Briand, Renaudel and Ribot, who all mentioned the need to arm the League of Nations.

Another characteristic of French internationalism was its reliance on law. Briand, Renaudel and Ribot envisaged law and justice as the basis of the international organisation. Linking law and armed force had a long history in France that could be traced back to at least the 17th-century philosopher Blaise Pascal. Two months after the June debates, Ribot cited Pascal in a speech defending his vision of a strong league of

[127] Renaudel's remark can also be interpreted as criticism aimed at Briand and the fact that he had not revealed his true war aims to Wilson. This does not mean, however, that he could not have also agreed with Briand on the lack of concreteness of Wilson's plan, especially because he himself seemed to have a fairly concrete plan of a league of nations based on international law and possessing economic and military sanctions.
[128] Blair 1992, 114-115.
[129] Following the terminology used in Jackson, 2013.

nations: 'What is the rule of law without force, if not the humiliation of justice oppressed by violence?'[130] The fact that Briand and Ribot exhibited signs of juridical internationalist thinking shows that a particular French way of thinking about an international organisation of peace was coming into view, even in the highest political echelons. Although there were differences in the attitudes towards the League, the French seemed to agree that it would have to rely on concrete rules and force. This view was influenced by the perceived threat of Germany and a long intellectual tradition combining peace with law. By contrast, on the American side, Wilson was geographically more distanced from the war, facing no imminent threat like the French, and therefore could afford to make more perfunctory plans for the world peace organisation. At this point, Wilson's main concern was simply to assure the foundation of the League and he did not care so much about its form. The French had a strong tradition of realist foreign policy and a pressing need to take concrete measures to secure their borders, whereas Wilson, coming from a distance, could afford to rely on more vague hopes.

Briand and Ribot used realist rhetoric in three different ways to influence the attitudes of their audience and strengthen their position. First, they discredited the opposition by framing it as idealistic and therefore impossible and dangerous. Second, they tried to legitimise their realist actions by resorting to a moral rhetoric. Finally, they justified their actions by framing them as necessary, thus normalising their realist policies. Importantly, the criticisms of idealism were not directed against internationalism in general, but against certain conceptions of it, namely the Socialist International and Wilsonian internationalism. This indicated that juridical internationalism was not considered idealistic among the French policy circles, or at least it was considered less so. Ultimately, Briand and Ribot's rhetoric was successful: they managed to convert deputies who were sceptical or hostile at the outset and win a large majority at the final vote in the Chamber of Deputies.

In conclusion, there were many different influences shaping the French conception of peace and the League of Nations. On the one hand, a strong fear of the German threat strengthened support for a traditional security concept based on territorial guarantees. On

[130] Quoted in Jackson, 68-69. Bourgeois later quoted Ribot quoting Pascal during the first session of the CIESDN.

the other hand, there was a rising influence of the Left and internationalism due to three difficult years in war, Wilson's declarations and the Russian revolution. Traditional security policy still had strong support among the French policy elites, even among the more moderate ones.[131] Although Premier Ribot's attitude towards the League of Nations was ambivalent, he nonetheless officially committed the French government to it through the Dumont agenda. The entry of the notion of a league of nations in the parliament and the declaration of support from the head of the government constituted a major change that indicated the rising popularity of internationalism in public opinion and the policy circles. Although the war had put severe restrictions on the parliament's powers, through a 'parliamentarism of war', the parliament managed to place itself in the heart of war. As a result, the parliament had a considerable effect on the course of the war by maintaining political debates that oriented war aims towards a more moderate direction.[132] The parliament was forced to acknowledge this new way of thinking, which is something that traditional historiography, which has presented French political leadership as firmly committed to power politics through the war, has often omitted.[133] The final results of the debate were mixed, with the Chamber of Deputies in favour, the Senate against, and the head of government somewhat ambiguous. Nevertheless, the Chamber had declared the establishment of a league of nations as a war aim and obliged the government to start working on it.

The rhetoric of realism was used by the French government in many ways to justify their actions and discredit those of the opposite view. By deeming some policies realist, necessary or pragmatic and others illusory, vague or dangerous, the rhetoric served to shape the attitudes of the audience. It was used to normalise power politics and discredit socialist and Wilsonian internationalism. In between this realist-idealist confrontation, however, a specifically French internationalist model was emerging, with powerful political figures sharing the view that the international organisation of peace should be better connected to the 'real' world and based on law and force.

[131] Jackson 2013, 147.
[132] 'Parlementarisme de guerre', expression of Fabienne Bock in Roussellier 2008, 13-30.
[133] Jackson 2013, 4.

3. Léon Bourgeois and the formulation of the French plan in the CIESDN

The Dumont agenda obliged the French government to start planning for the League of Nations. For this purpose, a special commission of legal and diplomatic experts led by Léon Bourgeois was formed. The work of this commission will be the subject of this chapter.

First, to put the commission in its political context, I will examine the central actors and the effect of their actions on the work of the commission. I intend to show that although the work of the commission was ambitious in the beginning, it encountered difficulties when the new strong-willed Premier Clemenceau took over the leadership of the country. Eventually, the uncooperative attitude of the government led to French voices being absent from the international discussions on the League and from the cooperation that was forming between President Wilson and the British political leadership.

In the second section, the focus will be on the content of the commission's plan for the League. I maintain that the French plan was heavily influenced by Léon Bourgeois and other juridical internationalists, who insisted that the League should be based on the linkage between international law and the use of force. The personal history of Bourgeois and the wider intellectual and ideological culture affected the juridical internationalist conception of the peace organisation. The League would be composed of an international council, a permanent tribunal, powerful systems of legal, economic, diplomatic and military sanctions enforced by an international army and a permanent command structure. The insistence on the juridical nature of the League was supposed to diminish concerns related to a supranational political organism, but the intrusions on state sovereignty and the extensive powers bestowed on the international organisation met with scepticism from other governments.

The final section will show that Bourgeois' thinking corresponded strikingly with the English school's synthetic approach to international relations. Bourgeois' League was a combination of realism and rationalism with a solidarist inclination, in which material

calculations of power mixed with socially constructed rules and order to form effective international cooperation.

3.1 Ambitious work of the CIESDN hindered by government inertia

The Dumont agenda passed on 5 June 1917 in the Chamber of Deputies obliged the French government to start preparations for the eventual creation of a league of nations. Up until this point, France had had no official policy on the League of Nations, which hindered its participation in the international debates on the League.[134] Premier Ribot, who had defended the cause in the parliament, founded the *Commission interministérielle d'Études pour la Société des Nations* (CIESDN), a commission charged to come up with a French plan for the League of Nations, on 22 July 1917. Léon Bourgeois, a long-time politician and French delegate to the Hague Peace Conferences in 1899 and 1907, was named as the chairman of the Commission. Ribot sent him a letter which contained instructions about the Commission's task. The aim of the Commission was to 'specify the scope of the formulation [of the League of Nations] and to study the terms under which could be considered the constitution of an organism that could safeguard the benefits of peace and civilisation between nations through a common agreement.'[135] This formulation contained no specific details, limits or wishes for the future organisation, outside the main principle of a union of nations to maintain peace in the world. This demonstrated that Ribot decided to continue his policy of vagueness and gave Bourgeois and the Commission a free hand in developing the League as they saw best.

The choice of members of the Commission had an important impact on its work. Preparatory work on the Commission started immediately after the June parliamentary debates. On 8 June 1917, Bourgeois' office circulated a note calling for the creation of a commission made up of military, economic, diplomatic and legal experts to devise a plan of the League of Nations that could be presented to an inter-Allied commission.[136]

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[134] Blair 1992, 110.
[135] 'De préciser la portée de cette formule et d'étudier sous quelles modalités on peut envisager la constitution d'un organisme propre à sauvegarder entre les nations, par une entente commune, les bienfaits de la paix et de la civilisation,' Ribot's letter to Bourgeois, 26 July 1917, Item 6, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[136] Blair 1992, 108-109.

Members of the Commission were chosen by Bourgeois and Jules Cambon, head of the political section of the French foreign ministry who had been named vice-president of the CIESDN.[137] The order of 22 July 1917[138] establishing the Commission reveals its original composition.[139] The members came from political, diplomatic, legal, administrative, military and academic fields. Many of them had strong ties to the foreign ministry, under which the Commission was placed. Legal and diplomatic orientations dominated.[140] Importantly, Bourgeois, Cambon, Jarousse De Sillac, Paul d'Estournelles de Constant and Gabriel Hanotaux had previously systematically and comprehensively thought about the League of Nations. The Commission quickly split into two factions. One was led by Bourgeois and advocated for a juridical internationalist League, while the other, led by Cambon, favoured the continuation of traditional alliance-based balance of power politics.[141] This internal division of the Commission negatively affected the influence of its work as the Commission was not always able to speak with a single voice. Strongest authority, however, lay with Léon Bourgeois who was a high-level politician, ex-premier, minister of labour, delegate to both Hague Conferences and member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.[142] The composition of the Commission, marked by experts in the legal, diplomatic and pacifist fields, and the personal influence of Bourgeois oriented its work towards a juridical internationalist conception of the future peace organisation.

Correspondence between Premier Ribot and President Wilson also influenced the work of the CIESDN. Ribot had informed Wilson about the creation of the CIESDN. Wilson's response to this note in August 1917 was negative because he still thought it was premature to contemplate the details of the League, fearing that it would lead to discord

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[137] Bourgeois and Cambon discussed nominations through correspondence, see Cambon's letter to Bourgeois, 20 July 1917, Item 5, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[138] Order establishing the commission to study the conditions of the constitution of the League of Nations, 22 July 1917, Item 4, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[139] Members included Admiral Lacaze, Ernest Lavisse, Paul Appell, Paul d'Estournelles de Constant, Louis Renault, André Weiss, Jean Gout, Henri Fromageot, René Péan and Paul Matter. Jarousse De Sillac, Bourgeois' personal secretary, and Claude Clauzel were named as secretaries of the commission. The group was later joined by Pierre de Margerie, Gabriel Hanotaux, Georges Payelle, Captain René Petit and Fernand Pila.
[140] Cambon, de Margerie, de Sillac, Clauzel, Pila and Gout were former diplomats, while D'Estournelles de Constant, Fromageot, Renault, Matter and Weiss were legal experts.
[141] Bourgeois, backed by de Sillac, Hanotaux, d'Estournelles de Constant, Pila, Gout and Weiss, advocated for a strong society of nations based on rule of law and collective security. Cambon, with de Margerie, Fromageot and Renault, on the other hand, were in favour of traditional balance of power politics. The two factions also disagreed on the membership of Germany: Cambon saw the organisation as a coalition of Allied countries aimed against Germany, whereas Bourgeois thought Germany should be admitted once it had become a democratic state.
[142] Blair 1992, 119-133, 152; Jackson 2013, 179-181.

among the Allied powers. His response indicated to Ribot that if he did not want to irritate the American president, the CIESDN had to work with discretion. Wilson's note also contained some formulations that were interpreted at Quai d'Orsay as indications of the form that the organisation should take. Wilson wrote in his response that he feared that difficulties could arise from a discussion on 'the form of the League, its presidency, the kind of *common force* and *joint command* it would have etc…' The French officials understood this formulation as an indication that Wilson would be open to the idea of a common military force and command.[143]

The first session of the CIESDN was held on 28 September 1917 in Bourgeois' cabinet.[144] Premier Ribot gave the Commission some precisions on its task, which was now 'to study the conditions of the international organisation signalled by President Wilson, and to plan sanctions that will give it a practical value.' The note that Wilson had sent to Ribot in August clearly influenced the French premier, who now specified his instructions by charging the Commission to study Wilson's ideas and sanctions of 'practical value', that is, the use of military force. Thus, Wilson's note had two effects on the CIESDN. First, it started to operate under the assumption that it would have to work in secret and avoid public discussion of its work. Second, that a collective military force of the League would have the backing of the American president.[145] The demand for discretion hindered the development of French public discussion of the League of Nations and France's participation in the international debates, as the CIESDN could not discuss its work in public.

The situation of the CIESDN was complicated due to changes in the government in the autumn of 1917, which was a tumultuous time in French politics. The socialists broke off from the Union Sacrée and Ribot's government fell. Paul Painlevé took over as premier in September but was replaced by Georges Clemenceau already in November. This was bad news for the CIESDN because Clemenceau was very sceptical about pacifists and the League of Nations. Clemenceau was a well-known and popular politician. Nicknamed

[143] Blair 1992, 114-118. Bourgeois quoted this part of Wilson's note in a letter he sent to Clemenceau on 19 February 1918. Bourgeois' letter to Clemenceau, Items 88-90, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE. Emphasis added.
[144] Invitation to the meeting, 26 September 1917, Item 7, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[145] Blair 1992, 114-118.

'the Tiger', he had created a reputation as an ardent patriot through his journal *L'Homme Enchainé* and as the president of Senate's Army and Foreign Affairs Commissions. In these functions he had had the advantage of obtaining important information on military operations by visiting war fields and trenches, and thus also gaining popularity among the soldiers and military leaders.[146] He was fiercely pro-war and very sceptical of Bourgeois. Still, Clemenceau and his new foreign minister Stephen Pichon had assured Bourgeois that the CIESDN could continue its work according to its original mandate. However, their bad relationship complicated the status of the Commission, which was forced to work in an ambiguous situation under the shadow of a government whose attitude towards it was marked either by reservation or total indifference. Publicly, Clemenceau avoided commenting on the League.[147]

In December 1917, the CIESDN agreed on a model for the League. Bourgeois presented a draft plan,[148] which he had been preparing for some months, and named a small subcommittee to examine it. The CIESDN largely agreed on the principles of Bourgeois' draft despite some changes made by the subcommittee. Bourgeois then proposed to Quai d'Orsay that these principles be presented to the Allied governments. Clemenceau and Pichon, however, stalled the advancement of this project and asked for more detailed plans. It was agreed that the Commission would provide them with more detailed studies on sanctions, after which discussions could be opened with the Allied nations. In December 1917, jurist and expert of international law André Weiss presented his report on the diplomatic, legal and economic sanctions, while the army general staff officer Captain René Petit prepared a report on the military sanctions. Both were accepted by the Commission in February 1918. The CIESDN continued to debate on the form of the international council from March 1918 to May 1918. It finally completed all reports on 8 June 1918, which closed the work of CIESDN. The French plan was now in the hands of the government.[149]

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[146] Garrigues, Jean (2004): *Les grands discours parlementaires de la Troisième République de Clemenceau à Léon Blum 1914-1940*. Armand Colin, [place of publication unknown], 23; Roussellier 2008, 25-26.
[147] Blair 1992, 170-176.
[148] Bourgeois' notes and draft plan in Items 9-20 bis, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[149] Blair 1992, 183, 198-202.

Meanwhile, the League of Nations had become the focus of international attention in January 1918, when first the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and then President Wilson held their speeches in support of the international peace organisation. President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points speech, in which he outlined his propositions for a post-war peace settlement, was particularly influential. As the fourteenth point of this speech, the League now became an essential part of the future peace agreement.[150]

The French government, however, proved to be hesitant in advancing the cause of the League. Bourgeois and Hanotaux thought that it would be necessary to hold negotiations on the League among the Allied powers before opening the peace negotiations. The reason for this was to avoid a situation where Germany could interfere in the negotiations by proposing its own version of the international organisation. Some, like Jean Gout, disagreed with the idea and thought that President Wilson would most likely still consider it premature. Bourgeois recommended to Clemenceau that France start discussions with the United States and Britain to establish an agreement on the general principles before one of them unilaterally and publicly formulated them. This advice was not taken up by Clemenceau, who remained sceptical towards the project, or by Foreign Minister Pichon, who was loyal to Clemenceau.[151]

Members of the CIESDN were getting anxious when it started to seem that France was not keeping pace with the international developments of the peace organisation. Hanotaux had suggested to Bourgeois that he should announce his plan in public to rally the public opinion behind it in order to include it in the eventual armistice and peace negotiations. Bourgeois, however, refused to do this without the acceptance of the government, which had specifically ordered that the CIESDN could not publicly discuss its work. The members of the CIESDN felt that the French were being overlooked due to their government's inertia. Clemenceau was indifferent to the internationalist cause and did not seem to care if Wilson founded the League on his own. Indeed, the premier's only concern at this point was to wage war and let others worry about the eventual peace. To Bourgeois, this seemed reckless and short-sighted.[152]

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[150] Ibid., 182.
[151] Bourgeois' letter to Clemenceau, 19 February 1918, Item 88, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE; Blair 1992, 185-190.
[152] Blair 1992, 180-181, 193-197.

By June 1918, Bourgeois had waited for months for Clemenceau's approval to open up a dialogue with other governments. Finally, Foreign Minister Pichon obtained permission from the premier to send the CIESDN report to the Allied governments. However, the plan was accompanied by a mention that the French government was not fully committed to it. The report was presented merely as a response to the recent calls to create the League and to give a historical and political perspective to the question. It was not meant to be taken as the Quai d'Orsay's adopted plan, but rather a paper that could be used as a discussion starter on the topic. Strikingly, the French government completely disowned itself from the work of the CIESDN. The plan, which was supposed to be the official programme, was now demoted to a mere discussion paper. As Blair has argued, this depreciation by Pichon and Clemenceau was probably the reason why none of the Allied governments sent a positive response or even a reply at all. France was subsequently brushed aside from the discussions on the League of Nations as the Americans and British started deepening their cooperation and developing a joint plan.[153]

While public discussions on the League of Nations were mounting up in the US and Britain, the CIESDN members still had not been able to get the word out in France. Frustrated by the inaction of Clemenceau's cabinet and fearing the French would be left out of the public debate, Bourgeois decided to end his silence and talk on behalf of the League in France to create public debate and put pressure on the premier. Bourgeois started to promote the cause of pacifism and internationalism among the civil society through the French Association for the League of Nations (*Association française de la Société des Nations* or AFSDN) in the autumn of 1918. The association had impressive members, such as ex-premiers Briand, Painlevé, Ribot and Viviani, but also CIESDN members Hanotaux, Appell and Lavisse. As the AFSDN expressed discontent with Clemenceau's government's League of Nations policy, the CIESDN members were breaking their agreement of discretion with the Quai d'Orsay. The programme declared by AFSDN was also a means to publicly communicate the CIESDN plan, which had so far only been sent to Allied government officials. Bourgeois also held public speeches, which were spread through magazines.[154] The willingness of Bourgeois and other

[153] Ibid., 210-215.
[154] Blair 1992, 273-77, 281-283; Jackson 2013, 222-223; Niess, Alexandre (2009): Léon Bourgeois (1851-1925) Juriste et ange de la paix, *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique.* Vol. 1, No. 11, 135-148.

CIESDN members to directly break their obligation of confidentiality showed that they were genuinely invested in advancing the cause of the League of Nations and informing the public about it, even against the will of the government.

To summarise, French planning of the League of Nations started swiftly after the Chamber of Deputies gave the order in the Dumont agenda. The CIESDN came up with a plan marked by juridical internationalism due to the heavy influence of Léon Bourgeois and his group, who had strong legal and pacifist backgrounds. Under Ribot's premiership, the Commission had a strong mandate that gave them a relatively free hand in the development of their plan, although they were forbidden from publicly discussing their work. The replacement of Ribot by Clemenceau at the head of the government complicated the situation for the CIESDN, whose actions were limited by the new premier. The internal divisions of the CIESDN and the bad personal relationship Bourgeois had with Clemenceau further contributed to the Commission's ineffectiveness. In the end, Clemenceau's sceptical government refused to advance the CIESDN's juridical internationalist plan and disavowed it. As a result, France was isolated from the first wave of international discussions on the League, which had been sparked by President Wilson's Fourteen Points speech and which led to the deepening of Anglo-American cooperation.

3.2 Léon Bourgeois' juridical internationalist plan of the League of Nations

The work of the CIESDN was heavily influenced by its president Léon Bourgeois, to the point that political elites often referred to it as the 'Bourgeois Commission'.[155] As Bourgeois was the dominant voice behind the CIESDN plan and a leading figure of French juridical internationalism, it is therefore important to take a closer look at his thinking. In this section, I will first explore Bourgeois' political and intellectual background. This will help us, secondly, to examine his conception of the League of Nations.

[155] Jackson 2013, 180.

Léon Bourgeois' background and career made him a perfect candidate to head the CIESDN and greatly influenced his thinking on the League of Nations. In 1917, Bourgeois already had a long political career behind him. He had served as Minister of the Interior, Foreign Affairs and Labour, as well as the president of the Chamber of Deputies and premier. During this time, he developed a reputation as a wise and talented speaker and good mediator, although he was also described by some of his critics as weak, lazy and a 'dreamer'. He was also a notable figure in the Radical Party, to whom he gave a cohesive social theory by developing his philosophy of solidarism. Bourgeois was a textbook example of the typical statesman in Third Republic France: he came from a bourgeois family, obtained a legal education and then proceeded to a political career where he served in many influential roles in the parliament and in different governments. He also combined his interest in law with pacifism and became a champion of the *paix par le droit* current that had been developing in France since the late 19th century. Bourgeois represented France in both Hague Peace Conferences in 1899 and 1907 and headed the commission charged with the task of devising diplomatic mechanisms to prevent armed conflict. He became an international spokesman for juridical internationalism and helped create the Permanent Court of Arbitration.[156] These experiences greatly influenced his thinking on the League of Nations. He would fight for a peace organisation with a strong foundation in international law and based on his political theory of solidarism.

Bourgeois had been developing his thoughts on the League of Nations for a long time, at least since 1899. He first outlined his views in November 1916 before the *Comité national d'études politiques et sociales*. The following analysis of his plan of the League of Nations is based mainly on Bourgeois' own drafts and notes found in the archives of the French foreign ministry in La Courneuve.[157] I will examine the main questions that Bourgeois was concerned with. First, the inclusion of Germany and how it would affect the nature of the organisation. Second, international law and the juridical organisation of the League. Third, the executive Council and the problem of supranational power.

[156] Blair 1992, 140-143; Jackson 2013, 65; Niess 2009, 135-148.
[157] Items 9-50, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.

The most important question to Bourgeois concerning the League of Nations seems to have been the universality of the organisation, that is, the inclusion of Germany and other Central Powers. Similarly to Ribot, Bourgeois' thinking on the issue was complex. As identified in the previous chapter, the German threat was a central concern in French thinking about the League. Bourgeois, too, saw 'German militarism' as an inescapable reality that threatened the peace in France and Europe. For him, Germans had an aggressive character and a different mentality, which meant that even a democratic German government posed the risk of revenge. Thus, he thought that the goal of the peace organism had to be international control of arms and the limitation of military power in Germany.[158]

In early 1917, Bourgeois envisioned the creation of the League in three stages following the defeat of Germany and the overthrow of its autocratic regime. In the first stage, the peace treaty would be established through international negotiations. The second stage would consist of the execution of the peace treaty, during which Germany's armament and military force would be dissolved. In the final phase, the treaty would come into effect and the rest of the member states would disarm. It was therefore essential that Germany would be included in the League to ensure its disarmament and control by the international society.[159] In this sense, Bourgeois exemplified the typical complex attitude of the juridical internationalists, which combined the punishment of the bellicose nation with enmeshing it into the international society. While he believed that Germany had to be punished for its crimes and should pay for the damages it had caused, this should not prevent it from joining the international organisation. On the contrary, by including Germany and the other Central Powers in the society of nation-states and the system of international law, they could be encouraged to become 'civilised' and responsible members of the international community. In his CIESDN plan, Bourgeois specified that all states should consent to the punishment of their crimes, the liberation of oppressed nationalities and the reparation of damages caused outside the conventions of war.[160] Even though Bourgeois shared the popular French view that Germany had to be punished, he argued that forcing Germany to pay reparations and dismantling its army were ways

[158] Bourgeois, Léon (1919): *La Pacte de 1919 et la Société des Nations*. Bibliothèque Charpentier, Paris, 13.
[159] Bourgeois 1919, 13-15; Blair 1992, 146-151.
[160] Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 30, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.

for it to prove its democratic reform, which would make it admissible to the League of Nations. He believed that the new international system would create stakes for the countries involved, which would encourage them to follow the international rules and comply with interferences to their national sovereignty.[161]

However, we can detect a shift in Bourgeois' thinking in the draft plans he prepared for the CIESDN. In them, Bourgeois redefined 'universal league' as signifying a league with a 'universalist tendency', which would be formed first among states that shared the 'same conception, same current interests, offering the same guarantees to one another through their free institutions and their common sentiment of the superiority of justice.'[162] By changing 'universalism' to 'universalist tendency', Bourgeois gave some freedom to the organisation to exclude or delay the admission of some nations. The conditions of entry could be interpreted as an exclusion of Germany, at least in the first stage, until it had abolished its autocratic regime and adopted the rule of law and democratic institutions. It was important to Bourgeois that all members of the League had democratic institutions that represented the people's will and respected the rule of law. Otherwise, they could not be trusted to act in conformity with the common rules of the League.[163]

Bourgeois' change of heart was probably due to the recent declarations of President Wilson and the Dumont agenda, which the Ribot government had committed to and which declared that only democratic nations could join the League. According to Blair, this was an important change because it led Bourgeois to compensate the risk of leaving Germany out by adopting more measures of force and establishing the League already during the war when Germany would be at its weakest.[164] Bourgeois was also taking into account the attitudes in domestic politics that saw the founding of the League as a 'premature peace' and a reconciliation with the Central Powers.[165] As noted in the previous chapter, the government and the right wing were committed to fighting the war until a total victory. Anything less was inconceivable. Therefore, Bourgeois had to exclude Germany from the

[161] Jackson 2013, 184.
[162] 'Même conception, mêmes intérêts actuels, s'offrant les uns aux autres mêmes garanties par leurs institutions libres et leur même sentiment commun du droit supérieur.' Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 9, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[163] Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 39, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[164] Blair 1992, 162-167.
[165] 'Trois autres autres raisons pour constituer pendant la guerre la Société des Nations' [Three other reasons to constitute the League of Nations during the war], 16 February 1918, Items 92-94bis, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.

League until the war had been won because he knew that including them earlier would never have passed in France. Unfortunately, this stance would put Bourgeois in a difficult position internationally, because President Wilson and British leadership insisted on founding the League only after the war to create a universal organisation that included the Central Powers.

It is important to note that for Bourgeois the question of universality was also closely linked to the juridical nature of the organisation. Bourgeois saw that a society directed against Germany would only have the mutual interests of the Allied powers as its common basis, which would depend on those interests coinciding. Germany could exploit differences in these interests to isolate France, violate the peace treaty and divide the League. Therefore, he thought that international law would provide a more solid foundation for peace than constantly shifting national interests. Insistence on the rule of law was more than just rhetoric for the juridical internationalists: it fundamentally changed the nature of the organisation. Basing the union on the rule of law would ensure that it would not be just another international alliance built on mutual interests that would collapse as soon as those interests shifted.[166]

At the same time, Bourgeois also believed in the realist logic of traditional French security policy, which was based on the assumption that France's security depended on the relative weakness of Germany. He thought that weakening would happen through an Allied victory and a peace treaty that would include economic, military and political sanctions to eradicate 'Prussian militarism'. While the disarmament policy of the League would take care of the military weakening, some measures were also needed to control the German population and industrial power. Traditional alliance politics seemed ill-advised to Bourgeois because over time balance of power politics would favour the most powerful and the most numerous. He believed that since France had a much lower birth rate than Germany, over time France would be on the losing side. He therefore preferred the League of Nations.[167] The League would erase the need to compete in power by introducing the codification of rules into law and their enforcement with a collective military force. Bourgeois was operating in a realist logic by calculating France's situation

[166] Jackson 2013, 180-184.
[167] Bourgeois 1919, 18-19; Blair 1992, 146-151.

in relation to Germany in terms of power. Interestingly, his calculations led him to a different solution than the traditionalists.

To ensure that the League of Nations would have the capability to enforce its decisions, the juridical internationalists envisaged arming it with a robust military organisation. The report on military sanctions was written by Captain René Petit and it envisaged a collective military force based on the strict limitation of the strength of national contingents.[168] The League would have its own permanent General Staff made up of members from different countries and contingents drawn from each country. The limitation of national strength was crucial, because it gave superior force to the international organisation and allowed the control of potentially rebellious member states. Motivated in part by scepticism towards Germany, Petit's plan envisaged many far-reaching measures of control and surveillance, such as controlling the quality of soldiers and examining national military budgets. These were highly intrusive of state sovereignty and therefore raised doubts in other countries' political leadership. In France, support for an international armed force even at the cost of encroaching national sovereignty was much more widespread and stretched across the political spectrum.[169] The juridical internationalists feared that without military force, any orders or declarations of the League ran the risk of becoming meaningless if the member states decided not to follow them. Without an international army, the compliance of each nation depended on their morality and valuing the common rules. Realist logic was thus central in the CIESDN plan on military force. The juridical internationalists calculated that if the League of Nations held a monopoly of armed force strong enough to defeat any rebellious state, all member nations would stay in line because it would be against their interest to go against such a powerful enemy.

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[168] 'Sanctions militaires. Rapport presenté à la Commission par M. Le Capitaine Petit' [Military sanctions. Report presented to the commission by Captain Petit], Items 66-78, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.

[169] Carl Bouchard's comparative study of American, British and French citizens' attitudes shows that the French were much more supportive of the use of military sanctions and greater encroachments on national sovereignty than the Anglo-Americans. Eight out of ten French citizens in the study supported the use of force by the international organisation, versus only 43.8% and 56% for the British and Americans respectively. Seven out of ten in France would also have consented to impediments to national sovereignty if they were required in the process of assuring the security of nations. According to Bouchard, the reason behind this was the overwhelming threat of Germany, against which traditional security measures seemed inefficient in France. In Bouchard 2006, 73-74, 77-78.

The use of force was tightly linked to the rule of law. Bourgeois thought that only an international legal organism could 'provide us with a new and superior guarantee of security.'[170] He therefore devoted considerable thought to the juridical mechanisms of the League. This is where his legal background and experience in The Hague showed. For Bourgeois, the League of Nations was a continuation of the work he had already started in The Hague. His continuous aim was to establish a mandatory international arbitration mechanism. The League would serve that purpose and act as an organism of arbitration and sanction.

In his CIESDN draft plan of the League, Bourgeois defined the issues that should be included in the 'contract of society', that is to say, under the jurisdiction of the League. He started with the need to define the 'Law of Nations', – the international law that would be the basis of the organisation – which would have to be elaborated following the 'Pretorian method', by which he meant that it would be based on customs, jurisprudence and tradition. Bourgeois did not want to fix preliminary imperative rules, but rather base the legal system on an accumulation of court decisions. For that reason, a juridical power had to be created 'between the Nations and above the Nations', which meant the 'implicit and progressive consent of voluntarily accepted rules.'[171] Bourgeois understood that to get all the states to respect the law, it was crucial not to force or coerce them; they should rather be led to understand the benefits of legal order and agree to it voluntarily. In Bourgeois' mind, this did not imply that the states were giving up their sovereignty because in the contractual agreement of entering into the League of Nations they were acting out of their own free will. The contractual agreement was based on mutual consent that benefited all parties. Just as with individuals in society, limitations to the personal freedoms of states should be understood as a necessary cost of a functioning international order.[172]

As to the powers of the international juridical organism, in his CIESDN draft plan, Bourgeois listed them as follows:

> 1. To proclaim the law between states and define the mutual obligations to which they must submit.

[170] Quoted in Jackson 2013, 180.
[171] Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 10, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[172] Jackson 2013, 188-189.

> 2. To judge and condemn violations of this law.
> 3. To set the sanctions and order the necessary reparations [...].
> 4. To assure the execution of its decisions by resorting to the collective military force if needed.[173]

The judiciary power of this organism resembled that of national courts, as it would uphold the law and resolve any violations of it. Interestingly, it also had the power to impose sanctions and enforce them through the use of military force. This is important to note because in this draft Bourgeois had not yet planned for an executive council, a political organ that would assure the execution of the court's decisions and sanctions.

The issue of the main political organ of the League was low on the list of priorities for Bourgeois. In his successive draft plans of the League, the first versions do not even mention a council, and when it first appears, only two sentences are devoted to it: 'The League of Nations is represented by an international organism composed of the heads of governments or their delegates. This organism nominates the members of the international tribunal.'[174] The final version included more details, which specified that the heads of government were going to meet periodically to examine matters of common interest. The political organism would also seek to mediate any disputes between member states and launch, if needed, an investigation under the conditions defined in the Hague Convention of 1907.[175] If an amicable resolution could not be reached, the international organism could send the case to the international tribunal or resolve it itself. The political organism would also be responsible for the execution of its decisions, as well as those of the tribunal, and it could request the member states to use their military, maritime and economic power against an offender member state, or any other state that was not part of the League that 'tried to impose its will on another state.'[176] The powers given to the executive council were significant: power to mediate, launch investigations and even resolve disputes between states, not to mention the power to force member states to attack

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[173] '1. Dire et proclamer le droit entre les Etats et définir les obligations mutuelles auxquelles ils doivent se soumettre. 2. Juger et condamner les violations de ce droit. 3. Fixer les sanctions et ordonner les réparations nécessaires […] 4. Assurer l'exécution de ses décisions requérant au besoin la force militaire collective.' Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 22, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[174] 'La Société des Nations est représentée par un organisme international composé des chefs responsables de gouvernements ou de leurs délégués. Cet organisme nomme les membres du tribunal international.' Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 40, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[175] Part III of the Hague Convention of 1907 sets up the conditions of launching an inquiry into facts related to a dispute.
[176] Bourgeois' draft plan, Items 46-50, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.

another state. This last power in particular – the decision of going to war – was a fundamental power of a sovereign state, that would now be transferred to the international organism.

Bourgeois originally thought that such an organism would not be needed. He estimated that the League could function through the simple codification and application of the law. The bureau of the Hague tribunal could take up the tasks of driving the processes of mediation, arbitration and collective security. It was Jean Gout who brought up the need for a political executive council and who produced a study on this question, which sparked debates among the different factions of the CIESDN. Cambon and Fromageot thought that many of the disputes the League would have to handle would be political rather than legal in nature, and therefore would not be suitable for arbitration at the international tribunal. Bourgeois' side, on the other hand, saw that with an ever expanding and more comprehensive corpus of law, most disputes could be solved through juridical mechanisms.[177]

Bourgeois' papers include a later draft where the organisation of the international council was elaborated further.[178] Unfortunately, due to the lack of date or indication of the author of the text, it is impossible for me to conclusively affirm the author of this document. However, if this draft was authored by Bourgeois or another member of the CIESDN, it would disprove Jackson and Blair's argument that the French did not plan the details of the functioning of the executive council.[179] Elements of the draft, especially relating to the military disposition of the League would indicate that this document did emanate from the French and therefore most likely from someone in the CIESDN. The document is entitled 'The International Council and the Delegation. Note of the president [or chairman]', which would lead one to conclude that the author was Bourgeois himself, as he was the chairman of the CIESDN.

[177] Jackson 2013, 186-187.
[178] 'Le Conseil international et la Delegation. Note du president' [International Council and the Delegation. Note of the president], Items 113-122, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[179] Blair 1992, 267-268; Jackson 2013, 187. Blair has argued that the CIESDN purposely did not address the question of the voting mechanism of the Council in order to avoid raising questions about state sovereignty and because they assumed the common goal among the League members to be so clear that no controversies would arise.

The draft envisaged that the Council would have a proportional voting system, in which states would have different numbers of votes and delegates depending on their military contributions. As the number of delegates would be high, the Council was thought to be more suited for deliberations than action. Therefore, a smaller, permanent Delegation (max. 15 members) would be named to prevent and solve conflicts and apply sanctions. The Delegation would be in charge of the process of conciliation. Conflicts of a juridical nature would be referred to the international court, whereas political and economic conflicts, not solvable through any law or treaty, would be resolved by the Delegation. The Delegation would also impose sanctions and the collective military response.

Importantly, specific attention was paid to the decision-making mechanism. It was specified that the Delegation would take decisions through a two-thirds majority vote. If this did not result in a decision, the matter could be brought to a majority vote in the Council. The issue of decision-making was not addressed in Bourgeois' other drafts, but this document proves that he had in fact planned it. The issue of voting rules is also crucial because the requirement of unanimity of all decisions has later often been identified as one of the League of Nations' major weaknesses because it made effective action very difficult.[180] Interestingly, this plan would have corrected that problem and removed the possibility of an action being vetoed by one member.

Another interesting and crucial point was that all decisions of the Delegation would still have to be approved by each state. If a state did not accept the decision, it could leave the League and give up all the advantages of membership. This supposedly guaranteed that the states would fully maintain their sovereignty, of which they had simply 'delegated' a part to the League. If giving states an easy exit from the League was Bourgeois' solution to the problem of state sovereignty, it seems problematic. By requiring states' approval of each of the Delegation's decisions, the decision-making process risked slowing down significantly and counteracting the whole purpose of the Delegation, which was to make efficient decisions in situations of urgency. Moreover, it significantly weakened the principle of collective security, which relied on the automatic response of all member states in the case of an aggression. The power of collective security was based on its

[180] The British and the Americans insisted on the principle of unanimity because they saw it as a way to safeguard national sovereignty. Blair 1992, 263-264.

credibility, which meant that enemies of the League needed to believe that any attack would be met with the full force of the international army. If the states had the option to back out of this responsibility, the deterring power of the mechanism would be dramatically weakened. Furthermore, the option of exiting the League does not seem to solve the problem of sovereignty, as it turns it into a choice between either being in the League or maintaining full national sovereignty.

If this document truly was authored by Bourgeois, it is significant because it proves that he did have a plan for the functioning of the executive council. It should be noted that his plan for decision-making in the Council corresponds with his later arguments during the Paris peace negotiations in favour of majority voting.[181] However, the insertion of states' right to consent to all decisions did not solve the central problem of Bourgeois' conception, that is, how to reconcile national sovereignty with the supranational authority of the League.

Jackson has criticised this ambiguity of juridical internationalism towards the question of a supranational authority and state sovereignty and seen it as one of the reasons why the French conception failed at the peace negotiations in 1919. He has argued that although the French internationalists did not want to create a super state, they still advocated the creation of a world court and robust sanctions that would require a supranational authority and significant intrusions into states' internal affairs to function.[182]

This is the problem that arose from the introduction of the executive council. Bourgeois had, in his original plan, considered the problem of combining a supranational authority and national sovereignty, and saw the rule of law as the solution. In his CIESDN draft, Bourgeois clearly set limits to the organism by insisting on the 'maintenance of the sovereignty of each state (*no universal state* –etc.),' the 'equality of rights of sovereign states' and by highlighting that 'the League of Nations does not aim to establish an international political state.'[183] Bourgeois was adamant on the point of respecting the

[181] Bourgeois' address to the Paris Peace Conference Plenary Session. Minutes of the Plenary Session Of 28 April 1919,Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Parisv03/d7 (accessed 15 April 2020).
[182] Jackson 2013, 188-189.
[183] 'Maintien de la souveraineté de chaque état (Pas d'état universel –etc.) [...] Égalité de droit entre ces Etats souverains', 'La société des nations n'a pas pour objet l'établissement d'un état politique

sovereignty of states. Therefore, he envisaged a legal system where the sovereignty of all states, regardless of their size, would be guaranteed equally. To Bourgeois, although the juridical organism of the League constituted a supranational authority, it would not be a super state, because its nature was strictly legal, not political. Therefore, it could not threaten the political independence of states, just as national courts of justice were not considered as a threat to individuals' independence.[184] As Bourgeois wrote: 'The sovereignty of each state is limited by the respect of the sovereignty of others, just as the liberty of each individual is limited by the respect of the liberty of others.'[185] Unfortunately, by caving into pressure from other members of the CIESDN to create a political executive council, Bourgeois undermined this argument and created a crucial weakness in his plan.

Bourgeois envisaged the League of Nations as an international organisation with a universalist tendency that would include a democratised Germany in order to enmesh it into the international society and control its military disposition. The linkage of law and force was central to the plan, which is why decisions would be made by a permanent tribunal guided by international law and supported by a collective military force. The executive council was the weak point in the CIESDN plan. Bourgeois did not consider it in his original drafts and tried to resist it because it undermined the basic principle on which he had based his organisation. By conferring substantial powers to a political organ, the League lost its strictly juridical nature, which was the justification for the extensive intrusions into national sovereignty. Bourgeois seems to have ignored the possibility of political conflicts that could not be solved simply by following legal protocols. The executive organ opened the door for power politics and alliances within the League and erased its political neutrality.

By analysing Bourgeois' plan of the League of Nations, we have been able to see that his thinking was greatly influenced by his legal background and experiences of international arbitration in The Hague. This is most clearly evident in his insistence on the juridical

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international.' Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 22, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE. Emphasis added.

[184] Bourgeois' draft plan, Items 9 and 22, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.

[185] 'La souveraineté de chaque Etat étant limitée par le respect de la souveraineté des autres, comme la liberté de chaque individu est limité par le respect de la liberté d'autrui.' Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 38, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.

nature of the organisation. The central place that the German question held in his thinking also shows that he was influenced by the ongoing war and the perceived threat of Germany. Bourgeois was participating in the ongoing discussions in France on national security and the League of Nations. He was adhering to the conventional terms of the discussion by agreeing with the traditional assumptions of German hostility and power politics. At the same time, however, he challenged them by presenting a solution based on the rule of law rather than the interests of states. He was also challenging the conventional terms of the international discussion on the League of Nations with his propositions of a supranational authority and extensive military measures, although these concepts had a longer history in the French *paix par le droit* tradition. The linkage of the rule of law with force was not only central to him, but to the CIESDN plan and to the juridical internationalists. It was the same linkage that was already manifested during the June parliamentary debates in Ribot, Briand and Renaudel's speeches. Behind it was the urge to anchor the League to something 'real' and concrete, such as international law and military force, and not some vague moral declarations or shifting political interests.

3.3 Bourgeois' solidarism and the English school

As we have seen, there was a realist flavour in Bourgeois' calculations of power and the way he envisaged the military organisation of the League. To clarify the relation of Bourgeois' juridical internationalism to French traditionalist realism and to Anglo-American idealism, I will now pay closer attention to the realist features in his thinking. This will help to identify the features of juridical internationalism that both connected it to and separated it from realism. I will argue that Bourgeois' thinking corresponds strongly with the English School's synthetic understanding of international relations, which combines elements from different traditional paradigms. Bourgeois' conception of international cooperation merged material power calculations with socially constructed rules in a mixture of realism and rationalism with a solidarist propensity.

Bourgeois identified himself as a realist. He wrote in his CIESDN draft plan of the League of Nations:

> Are we *idealists*? *Dreamers*? No–, alas, we are *realists*, all too familiar with the bloody ordeal that desolates humanity. There is a real, primordial, vital interest that is superior to all interests: peace.[186]

The fact that Bourgeois felt the need to declare himself and the juridical internationalists realists indicates that they were being challenged as 'idealists' or 'utopians' by their contemporaries, and that the question of realism was a central concern at the time. Another example can be found in Premier Clemenceau's words in the Chamber of Deputies in November 1917, when he said:

> The truth is that many thinkers, philosophers, deputies, senators, politicians and Frenchmen are convinced that a *miracle* will suddenly happen and create a league of nations. [...] I share your *idealism*. But I am not mistaken about the *reality* of things.[187]

The sense in which Bourgeois and Clemenceau used the terms 'realism' and 'idealism' was not the theoretical meaning I use in this study, but rather a more mundane concept referring simply to the estimated feasibility of something. Yet, this meaning is also central in IR theory's understanding of realism and its relation to idealism, because they were born out of this political culture and are still strongly associated with these value appreciations of the rationality of the one and the impossibility of the other. However, I will argue that 'realism' in the IR sense of the word was also strikingly present in Bourgeois' thinking, and especially in the more theoretical side of his work: the theory of solidarism.

In order to understand Bourgeois' conception of internationalism, it is necessary to explore how he developed his own political theory in his publications. His work called *Solidarité*, which appeared in 1896, provided the basis for a social theory he named solidarism. It was based on the idea that individuals in society owed a debt to their

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[186] 'Sommes-nous des idéalistes? Des rêveurs? Non-, des réalistes hélas! Trop instruits par la sanglante épreuve qui désole l'humanité. Il y a un intérêt réel, primordial, vital, supérieur à tous les intérêts: la paix.' Bourgeois' draft plan, Item 13, Vol. 17, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE. Emphasis added.

[187] 'La vérité c'est que beaucoup de penseurs, de philosophes, de députés, de sénateurs, d'hommes politiques, de Français sont convaincus qu'il va arriver tout d'un coup un miracle qui réalisera la Société des Nations [...] Votre idéalisme, c'est le mien. Je ne m'abuse pas sur la réalité des choses.' 'Séance du 20 Novembre 1917' [Minutes of the session of 20 November 1917], 20 November 1917, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6306070f.item (accessed 9 April 2020).

ancestors, whose accumulated heritage they could enjoy. To repay this debt, individuals had obligations towards their peers in society. Laws were the codification of these mutual responsibilities and duties individuals owed to each other. The interdependence of individuals in a society created a need for this 'social contract'. To ensure the respect of this contract the state had the right to intervene in the relations between individuals through the use of courts of justice and the police. In other words, the rule of law needed to be backed up by force by the state, which would result in the 'mutualisation' of individual security. This also meant replacing purely moral obligations by legal codified protocols and sanctions. Although Bourgeois developed the theory on a societal level, he later expanded it to the international level and applied it to relations between states. Here, individuals would be replaced by states and international law would represent the codification of states' mutual responsibilities and duties to each other.[188]

There are fundamental similarities between Bourgeois' solidarism and realism. First of all, they share a similar positivist epistemology. With solidarism, Bourgeois was applying positivism to social sciences. Bourgeois believed that just as the natural world was governed by natural laws, the social world would be similarly governed by social laws. Thus, to improve society, social sciences had to 'resolve the question of relations between the individual and the human society.'[189] In other words, politicians could regulate society once they understood the laws governing the social world. This kind of scientific positivism is also central in realism, which claims to have identified the basic conditions and fundamental, universal and timeless laws that govern international relations.[190]

There are more remarkable resemblances between Bourgeois' understanding of the international system and realism. Bourgeois believed that primary actors in international relations are nation-states that exist in an anarchical world of interdependence. This creates what John Herz, a classical realist, called the 'security dilemma', where the lack of a supranational authority forces states to exist in permanent insecurity caused by living in an anarchical system, or the 'state of nature'. Nations thus have to provide for their

[188] Blair 1992, 142; Jackson 2013, 188; Niess 2009, 138-139.
[189] Quoted in Niess 2009, 138.
[190] Beer and Hariman 1996, 4-5.

own security and potentially or actually threaten to harm others in the process.[191] Bourgeois' international solidarism was a solution to the problem of security. To overcome the insecurity of states caused by the anarchical nature of the international system, he proposed that the relations between states be codified into law, which could then be enforced by a supranational juridical authority. Just as the state has the right to intervene in relations between individuals to ensure the respect of the social contract, the supranational juridical authority could intervene in relations between states. International law would then transform the previously moral obligations between states to strictly legal protocols and sanctions. Thus, unlike idealism, Bourgeois' solidarism did not base internationalism on morality, but erased it completely from the equation and replaced it with law.

Although his interpretation of the international system corresponded with that of classical realists, Bourgeois' solution to the security dilemma approached the English school's paradigm of 'rationalism', which highlights the importance of shared rules, institutions and norms of states and the institutionalisation of shared interests. It is based on the assumption that if the states in the system share an understanding of common rules, it will condition their behaviour. Martin Wight's description of the rationalists as understanding the state of nature as a 'quasi-social condition' that is created either by natural law or social contract corresponds with Bourgeois' thinking to the point of using the same language.[192]

The English school is characterised by having a synthetic or pluralist approach to IR, combining theories of realism, rationalism and revolutionism. This categorisation was proposed by Wight, who thought that international relations could not be understood through one of these conceptualisations alone, but by combining them. Realism, as we have previously defined, views international relations as constituted of states pursuing their own interests. Rationalism, on the other hand, conceives of states as operating within international law and diplomacy. Revolutionism places importance on humans rather than

[191] See Booth, Ken and Wheeler, Nicholas (2008): *The security dilemma: fear, cooperation, and trust in world politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; Herz, John (1951): *Political Realism and Political Idealism*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
[192] Buzan, Barry (2004): *From international to world society? English school theory and the social structure of globalisation.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 33.

states and imagines a cosmopolitan world community.[193] Bourgeois' solidarism was a synthesis of realism and rationalism, where raw, material calculations of power were combined with a belief in the influence of socially constructed rules and order.

In addition to the division into the above-mentioned three conceptualisations, the English school is also divided into two currents with differing views of how comprehensive the rules of the international society should be and how extensively the foundational norms of sovereignty and non-intervention should be violated. Pluralists tend to stress the sovereignty principle and believe in minimal rules of societal coexistence, whereas the other side, the solidarists, believe in more extensive rules and institutions facilitating coexistence and cooperation, including forms of collective enforcement.[194] Just as the logic of solidarists of the English school, Bourgeois' solidarism was also based on the belief of wide-ranging international cooperation and collectively ensuring its enforcement. Like them, he also believed that a sense of solidarity, or shared values, had to exist between the member states, which is why he insisted that only 'civilised' or democratic states could join the League. President Wilson, on the other hand, would fall on the more pluralist side, as he placed more importance on the sovereignty of states and their territorial integrity.

However, as Buzan has argued, pluralism and solidarism are not mutually exclusive, but rather form a spectrum ranging from thin to thick sets of shared rules, norms and institutions. Bourgeois shared the understanding of the English school solidarists of a more expansive and interventionist international order, but he did not believe in the cosmopolitan values or the power of shared moral norms that have been stressed by the more Kantian or revolutionist side of solidarists. Instead, he approached the pluralist side in his concentration on the state as the primary actor and his functionalist understanding of the international society as a guarantee against security threats. Buzan has also argued that seeing these approaches on a spectrum allows for a more 'juridical' view of sovereignty, where it is understood as a social contract, the terms of which can be renegotiated when needed.[195] This is also how Bourgeois understood it: by entering the

[193] Jackson, Robert and Sørensen, Georg (2003): *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 133-139.
[194] Buzan 2004, 7-8.
[195] Ibid., 45-49, 139.

League states would renegotiate the terms of their sovereignty in a way that allowed some interference by the international organisation. Understood this way, state sovereignty and collective enforcement of common rules were not in contradiction.

The English school is characterised by the simultaneous existence of these different theories, promoting a pluralist understanding of international relations that blurs traditional divisions, such as the opposition between realism and idealism. Similarly, we can see that Bourgeois' internationalism was a synthesis of realism and rationalism that fell on the thick end of the pluralist-solidarist spectrum. Although Bourgeois believed in wide-ranging international cooperation, collective enforcement and solidarity, he also stressed the centrality of the state, anarchy and the international system as practical solutions to the problem of security. Like the English school, Bourgeois' juridical internationalism was a synthesis that transcended the traditional realism/idealism divide. Bourgeois' League of Nations was the solution to the problem posed by the anarchy of the international scene: a supranational juridical authority would erase the need for power politics through the codification of relations between states into legal protocols and sanctions.

In conclusion, the CIESDN devised an ambitious plan for the League of Nations, which was unfortunately hindered by the Clemenceau government that delayed the communication of their plan to the Allied governments and to the general public. Clemenceau's government further weakened its effect by disowning it. For these reasons, France was excluded from the international League of Nations discussion and the tightening cooperation between the United States and Britain.

The CIESDN plan was marked by Léon Bourgeois and juridical internationalism, which advocated a deep union of states based on law and the use of force. Critically, the French conception's basis was the rule of law and not the political interests of states. The combination of law and military force was a product of both the personal influence of Bourgeois and the wider current of the 'peace through law' legalist culture in France.

The CIESDN plan exhibited realist characteristics as it was based on calculations of the states' economic and military power. Bourgeois was also criticised as an idealist by his contemporaries, which probably also had an effect on his thinking by making him feel

the pressure to anchor the organisation in ‘the real world’. Bourgeois’ thinking was also close to realism on a deeper theoretical level. He shared classical realism’s ontology and epistemology in his understanding of international relations and the positivist belief that the world was governed by universal laws. Bourgeois’ internationalism was a mix of realism and rationalism, which presented a solution to the realist problem of security by introducing law and force into the system marked by the anarchical interdependence of states, thus mutualising states’ security and replacing morality with legal protocols.

However, the CIESDN plan had weak points, which lay in the extensive interference into state sovereignty. The creation of a supranational authority and invasive meddling in national affairs would prove to be hard points to sell to other governments. Support for these measures was stronger in France than in the Anglo-American countries. This was most likely due to the fear of a German attack, which felt most imminent and visceral to the French, who shared a long border with them. In contrast, the British and the Americans had a sea separating them from the immediate threats of the European continent.

In this chapter I have also tried to show that, contrary to the narrative of traditional historiography, which has presented the French programme merely as an effort to extend the Allied anti-German coalition into peacetime, the CIESDN came up with a concrete and innovative internationalist solution based on the rule of law. Although Cambon’s faction was advocating the continuation of wartime alliances and the winning conception was marked by scepticism towards Germany and traditional and realist conceptions of power and security, the intention of the CIESDN was to create a non-political, universalist organisation that would end wars and ensure the security of all states, including the Central Powers. The work of the CIESDN should be understood in its context, that is, taking part in the ongoing debate in French society about national security. Hostility and scepticism towards Germans were common among the French at the time, and the members of the CIESDN were not immune to these inclinations. The intention of the CIESDN was to create a League that could protect France from a German attack. They, however, also challenged the conventional terms of the security discussion in France with their conception of a League that would eventually include the Central Powers. Although the French programme clashed with the British and Wilsonian views of universality by envisioning leaving Germany out of the League initially, their ultimate intention was a

universal system in which the Central Powers would be included to better control them and to create stakes for them to follow the common rules.

4. International negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference

With the work of the CIESDN, France had an official plan for the League of Nations. But whether this plan would become reality would be decided at the Paris Peace Conference. With weak support from Clemenceau's government and an incipient Anglo-American coalition forming against him, Bourgeois faced an uphill battle in the international negotiations. In this final chapter, I will turn to the international level of discussion by exploring the process of creating the Covenant of the League of Nations during the Paris Peace Conference. This is where the French juridical internationalist conception of the League was confronted with the Anglo-American one and ultimately lost to it. The purpose of this chapter is to illuminate both the political and ideological reasons that led to the failure of the French vision of the League.

In order to do this, I will first examine the diplomatic process leading up to and during the peace negotiations to discover what political pressures and strategies led to the final outcome. The French delegation presented an ambiguous attitude towards the League of Nations due to the divergent views of Clemenceau and Bourgeois, which weakened their diplomatic position vis-à-vis the League question. In the end, the fate of the French League conception was sealed when Clemenceau sacrificed the French amendments to gain deals with President Wilson elsewhere.

In the second part, the focus will be on the debates that took place in the League of Nations Commission, where Léon Bourgeois defended the CIESDN plan against President Wilson and Lord Robert Cecil. Here, I will look at the questions that divided the two camps and the dynamic of these discussions. The main points of contention were related to the military and juridical provisions of the League. The French delegation was overpowered by Wilson and Cecil who were working closely together.

The final part of this chapter is a comparative analysis of the different conceptions of the League using the concepts of realism and idealism. The analysis will illustrate the fundamental ideological differences between the Anglo-American and the juridical internationalist models that made it impossible to incorporate both views into the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The French juridical internationalist model of the League of Nations failed at the international negotiations for two main reasons, one political and the other ideological. First, due to the political strategies of Clemenceau and Wilson, Bourgeois was facing an impossible fight in the negotiations and was doomed to fail. Second, there were essential ideological discrepancies between the Anglo-American and juridical internationalist conceptions that could not be reconciled.

4.1 Diplomatic strategies behind the failure of Bourgeois' plan

The leaders of the Allied Powers convened at the Paris Peace Conference to work out the peace treaty that would put an end to the Great War. Part of these negotiations was also the question of the League of Nations, which was supposed to help maintain the resulting peace. This section will illustrate the political context surrounding the conference and the negotiations that took place between the French delegation and the American and British ones. The different actors – Wilson, Clemenceau and Bourgeois – were all responding to different pressures and devised different tactics to achieve their priorities. This ultimately led to the failure of the juridical internationalist model of the League of Nations when Clemenceau sacrificed it in order to strengthen transatlantic solidarity and attain territorial guarantees on the Rhine.

After the fighting in the First World War had stopped, support for peace and hope for a meaningful change in world politics were widespread around the world. The unprecedented horrors of the war led some to believe that it would also be the last war and that never again would such hostility be let to erupt. There was a strong and widespread view that a radical change in international relations was coming. In France, a 'religion of peace', as Carl Bouchard put it, reigned. Public opinion and political parties across the spectrum were pro-peace.[196] The Paris Peace conference was also the first time when the leaders of democratic states around the world undertook the reorganisation of the international system. The horrible slaughter of the war had altered the international

[196] Bouchard 2006, 67-68.

normative context and the expectations put on 'civilised' nations.[197] It was therefore a propitious moment for the creation of a global organisation of peace. All participants involved in the peace negotiations were aware that they were part of a historical moment and that their decisions would affect the lives of people all around the world for generations to come. The awareness of such momentous stakes was bound to guide the actions of the decision-makers. While there was a general expectation for a lasting peace that would prevent the events of the Great War from happening again, there was no consensus on what kind of settlement would guarantee such a result. The aspirations and objectives of the Allied nations were not readily compatible with each other, let alone with Germany and other defeated nations. Some saw the situation as a confrontation between the old world order, characterised by imperialism and secret diplomacy, and the new ideal of a 'democratic peace' preached by President Wilson.[198] In the end, as Bouchard put it, 'every nation has its own culture, ambitions, its population to please, and that is why, in the situation of negotiation, every decision remains subordinate to the preservation of national interests.'[199]

Because of the great expectations of peace, no one dared to oppose the founding of the League of Nations, but visions of the form it would take were very different. Indeed, the leaders who gathered at the Paris Peace Conference were responding to very different pressures from their home countries. In America, many voices were against a strong League that could meddle in national affairs or force American troops to intervene in European quarrels. In France, public opinion was more supportive of a robust League of Nations capable of ensuring French national security.

Countries had their own specific war aims, which they tried to obtain in the settlements. The Clemenceau government was secretive about its official goals in the peace negotiations, but it was clear that they would include weakening Germany and obtaining reparations and territorial claims in Alsace-Lorraine and the Rhineland.[200] There was significant public pressure in France for obtaining harsh conditions for Germany. The

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[197] Jackson 2013, 203.
[198] Thompson, John A. (2013): *Woodrow Wilson*. Routledge, London, 187.
[199] Bouchard 2006, 71.
[200] Blair 1992 363-367; Jackson 2013, 223, 231-232; Soutou, Georges-Henri (2015): French War Aims and Strategy. In: Afflerbach, Holger (ed.) *The Purpose of the First World War. War Aims and Military Strategies*. Walter De Gruyter GmbH, Berlin and Boston, 39-44.

return of Alsace-Lorraine and the demand of vast reparations from Germany were the most widely shared opinions among the French. Even the socialists, who called for improved relations with a democratic Germany, did not rule out sizable reparation payments. As a result, there was considerable pressure on Clemenceau to obtain harsh conditions for Germany and territorial annexations for France.[201] On the American side, President Wilson's key aim was to establish a new international system based on the League of Nations. He had been proclaiming the creation of the peace organisation for the past few years and therefore had important political stakes in the matter.[202] At the same time, there existed an important isolationist opposition that resisted American involvement in the League of Nations. As for Britain, their main demands consisted of recovering German colonies, disabling their navy and getting reasonable reparations without economically incapacitating Germany, as it was an important trading partner for them.[203]

The negotiators in Paris operated in an environment of complex pressures and demands coming from different directions. While they all felt the pressure of the global population yearning for a lasting peace, at the same time they had to take into account the aims of the other nations, but also the opinions of the public and the different political factions in their countries, to get the final treaty ratified in their national parliaments. As we will see, during the negotiations, Wilson, Clemenceau and Bourgeois all used public opinion or political feasibility as an argument to justify their claims. This need to react to several different demands was also manifest in the French delegation's unclear attitude towards the League of Nations. As a result, the French had an ambiguous position towards the question of the League of Nations starting from the armistice negotiations and continuing into the peace settlement. Clemenceau's government would publicly declare in favour of the international peace organisation, but at the same time undermine it and push for traditional security policies.

Armistice negotiations were opened in November 1918, after the United States had entered the fighting and the tide of war had turned against Germany. Wilson had a significant diplomatic upper hand when he entered into the negotiations. American

[201] Jackson 2013, 220-222, 231-233.
[202] Jackson 2013, 103, 216.
[203] Ibid., 215-217.

military and economic aid had been decisive in the Allied victory. He also held moral authority thanks to the popularity of his ideas of the League of Nations and the fact that the Germans had sued for peace based on his Fourteen Points.[204] He used this power to insist that the League of Nations should become a central part of the peace treaty. The question of including the League of Nations in the treaty divided the French government and President Wilson and created a negative start for their relationship. The Clemenceau government was hostile to the idea of linking the peace settlement with the international organisation. They were more concerned about the territorial and economic arrangements and wished to settle these issues first. Wilson, on the other hand, intended for the League of Nations to serve as a mechanism to enforce the terms of the peace treaty and to adjust the imperfections that were bound to arise from the settlement. Therefore, to him the League was central to the whole peace treaty. Although Clemenceau disliked Wilson's politics, he eventually decided to accept the Fourteen Points and declared in favour of the League of Nations, while insisting, however, that France should have the right to ask for reparations and territorial claims in Alsace-Lorraine and the Rhineland, because this was central to French public opinion.[205] As a result, although Wilson and Clemenceau eventually came to an agreement, there now existed a mutual dislike and considerable differences of opinion between the two.

President Wilson's estimation of the French further deteriorated due to some diplomatic blunders of Quai d'Orsay officials Stephen Pichon and André Tardieu, who tried to demote the League of Nations from being the basis on the peace agreement. The French foreign ministry's unwillingness to plan the organisation of the peace negotiations according to Wilson's wishes left a bad impression on the American president. It had already been agreed that a central place would be awarded to the League, but Pichon and Tardieu's actions showed Wilson that France did not place their trust in the international organisation and that he was not going to get their support for it. At the same time, French efforts in securing an alliance with the British fell through as they chose to cooperate with the United States instead.[206] The French were off to an inauspicious start in the negotiations on the League of Nations, as the powerful United States were joined by the British and they regarded the French attitude towards the League with scepticism.

[204] Henig 2010, 16; Jackson 2013, 216-217; Thompson 2013, 190.
[205] Blair 1992, 293-295; Jackson 2013, 216-218.
[206] Blair 1992, 302-318, 324-337.

Although France had officially agreed to advance the cause of the League, their actions indicated a disregard for the matter.

A similar confrontational dynamic between the French and Anglo-American delegations continued in the official peace conference in Paris. The cooperation between the US and Britain deepened as they planned the League in secret and dominated the negotiations as a united front.

Officially, the main decision-making body of the Paris Peace Conference was the Plenary Conference. In practice, however, almost all important matters were decided in the Council of Ten, which consisted of delegates from the 'Great Powers': the United States, France, Britain, Italy and Japan. Detailed work, such as the question of the League of Nations, was conducted in special commissions appointed by the Council of Ten. In the first meeting of the Great Powers' delegates on 12 January 1919, Wilson and Lloyd George demanded for the matter of the League of Nations to be handled first, before proceeding to other questions, to which Clemenceau reluctantly agreed to. A special commission in charge of the League of Nations was created. It worked from February to April, publishing a first draft on 14 February 1919. The final Covenant was adopted in the Plenary Conference of 28 April 1919.[207]

The peace conference officially opened on 18 January 1919, but the weeks preceding the formal meetings were crucial to the final conception of the League of Nations. It was during this time that the numerous plans[208] developed by different governments or groups were integrated into a draft plan that would serve as the basis of the work of the League of Nations Commission. Until the opening of the peace conference, there had been no official coordination between countries.[209] Crucially, the French delegation was left out of these deliberations, which consisted of American and British participants only.

Indeed, President Wilson, his advisor Colonel Edward M. House and the British delegate Lord Robert Cecil agreed on 8 January 1919 that the US and Britain should settle on a

[207] Henig 2010, 18-22; Jackson 2013, 230.
[208] These plans included the plans of the CIESDN and the British Phillimore Committee, but also those of Wilson, Colonel House, General Jan Smuts, as well as the Italian and German plans and those of several civil society organisations, such as the League to Enforce Peace.
[209] Blair 1992, 402-403, 411-413.

common plan. They agreed on the basic principles of the organisation and exchanged draft projects that were never shared with the French. On 2 February 1919, they settled on the Hurst-Miller plan – written by the legal advisors of the two delegations, Cecil Hurst and David Hunter Miller – as basis for the work of the League of Nations Commission. All this happened without the French being informed or consulted, which inevitably weakened the position of the French delegation that now had to fight against a strong, unified Anglo-American front.[210]

It was a deliberate tactic of Wilson and Cecil to work in secret and to leave out the French delegation. The reason for this was both the poor opinion Wilson had gained of the French during the preliminary negotiations and the significant differences of opinion between them in the matter of the League of Nations.[211] Therefore, by showing little support for the League of Nations in the armistice and pre-peace conference negotiations, Clemenceau's government had already gravely harmed the diplomatic position of the French League of Nations delegation before the official negotiations had even started.

Clemenceau appointed Léon Bourgeois and Ferdinand Larnaude, Dean of the Faculty of Law of Paris and AFSDN member, as members of the French delegation to the League of Nations Commission. They were committed to defending the CIESDN plan and believed that France's security would be guaranteed by the League in the future. Interestingly, Clemenceau gave Bourgeois substantial liberties and powers in the negotiations. Bourgeois could personally discuss the League of Nations with President Wilson *en toute liberté* and he would have the authority to negotiate in the name of France and to engage the government in agreements he found acceptable.[212] Clemenceau probably gave these wide powers to Bourgeois because he did not have high regard for the task. This was illustrated by the fact that he named the French delegates at a late date and instead of organising a proper meeting to discuss strategy, he only gave instructions to Bourgeois via a short telegram.[213]

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[210] Blair 1992, 414-417, 423; Henig 2010, 18.
[211] The blame also partly fell on Léon Bourgeois, who was absent organising a civil society organisations' conference and did not try to influence the Anglo-American leadership at this crucial moment. Blair 1992, 439-441.
[212] Clemenceau's telegram to Bourgeois, 17 January 1919, Item 2, Vol. 18, Coll. PA-AP 029, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[213] Ibid.; Blair 1992, 388-393, 396-397.

The League of Nations Commission charged by the Council of Ten to write the Covenant was different from the other commissions because of its high-level composition. It was chaired by President Wilson himself and also included the Italian head of state, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. Other delegates included notable League of Nations advocates, such as Colonel House, Lord Robert Cecil, and General Jan Smuts, a South African League of Nations theorist whose ideas had greatly influenced President Wilson. Due to the high-level composition, Bourgeois and Larnaude were also given the power of plenipotentiaries that enabled them to speak in the name of France without having to consult the government first.[214] Although Bourgeois and Larnaude had gained significant power and autonomy vis-à-vis the French government, representing their country as plenipotentiaries among powerful heads of state, their actual position in the Commission was weak. Wilson and Cecil, who had managed to form a joint Anglo-American coalition, dominated the discussions.

From the start, Wilson and Cecil managed to steer the work of the Commission in the direction they wanted. In the first session of the Commission, Wilson and Cecil hammered through the adoption of the Hurst-Miller plan as the basis for the Covenant. This placed Bourgeois in a difficult position and he was forced to blindly agree with the Anglo-American draft. The Hurst-Miller draft was the only plan deposed for consideration[215], it was only provided to the delegates at the meeting and only in English, which meant the participants had no possibility to study the proposal properly. Despite some protestation, Cecil and Wilson managed to convince other delegates to their side and Bourgeois was forced to agree to their plan.[216] Being forced to use the Anglo-American plan as the starting point for the negotiations was an important setback for the French because it meant that they could only insert their views by proposing amendments, which had to be unanimously approved by the Commission. The situation was made even more difficult by the close collaboration of Wilson, House and Cecil, which gave them

[214] Blair 1992, 461.
[215] Minutes that were written later claimed that Italian and French plans had also been deposed, but this seems to have been a falsification of the records designed to hide the unfair treatment of the French delegation, at least according to the convincing argumentation of Blair. Blair 1992, 462, 478-79. See also Miller, David Hunter (1928a): *The Drafting of the Covenant. Volume I.* G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 130-132.
[216] Miller 1928a, 130-136; Blair 1992, 462-473.

the power to reject Bourgeois' amendments, as they could guide the debates and drive back his propositions.[217]

Bourgeois and Larnaude nonetheless relentlessly defended their juridical internationalist view. Following Clemenceau's instructions, Bourgeois and Larnaude tried to pass their amendments, and when they failed, reserved the right to defend them in the Plenary Conference. Their obstructionism vexed the Anglo-American side to the point that House and Cecil reached out to Clemenceau and other French officials to demand for explications, as Bourgeois' policies seemed to be in contradiction with promises the premier had made before.[218]

It is important to note that what finally sealed the fate of the French juridical internationalist conception of the League, were Clemenceau's actions during the negotiations. Clemenceau, as the premier and the head of the French delegation, was ultimately in charge of French policy in the peace negotiations. He had also centralised decision-making to himself and a small circle of advisors, which made his voice ultimately decisive.[219] His attitude towards the League of Nations was ambiguous in the eyes of the American and British delegations due to his conflicting promises and actions on the matter. The ambiguity of the French position increased when Bourgeois started to promote policies in the League Commission that were at times contrary to promises made by Clemenceau.

The French government's main plan for the peace negotiations was to obtain guarantees of security against Germany. These included most importantly the return of Alsace-Lorraine, which had been lost to Germany in 1871, but also the annexation of the German Saarland coal mines. The French government also envisaged fixing the western frontier of Germany on the Rhine and placing the Rhineland under the military and political control of Allied countries. These concessions would weaken Germany territorially and

[217] Blair 1992, 475, 487.
[218] Ibid., 518-521, 542-543, 547-548.
[219] Clemenceau's popularity at the end of the war gave him extraordinary political authority allowing him to marginalise both the parliament and his cabinet in the peace negotiations. Although the parliament in theory had supremacy in the peace negotiations, since its approval was needed for ratification, Clemenceau sidelined it, planning to present the results of his negotiations to the parliament only after they had been agreed upon, at which point the refusal to approve would be done at a risk of a major political crisis. Jackson 2013, 204-206.

economically and compensate for French demographic and economic inferiority. The proposals of territorial annexations encountered fierce opposition from Wilson and the British delegation.[220] Eventually, a compromise was reached when Clemenceau agreed to concessions in the Rhineland.[221] It is important to note that Clemenceau agreed to this compromise in exchange of a security alliance in which the United States and Britain promised to aid France in case of a German attack.[222] For Clemenceau, this pact was a means to cover the gap of security that he thought that the League was unable to do.[223]

Furthermore, as Jackson has argued, although Clemenceau believed in weakening Germany to restore a favourable balance of power to France, his actual priority was maintaining solidarity with France's democratic allies, Britain and the United States.[224] This strategy was not only manifested in the security pact, but also when Clemenceau agreed to support Wilson on the League question. Indeed, in order to maintain solidarity among the Allied – in other words, to not let the League of Nations question divide them – Clemenceau agreed to supporting the American vision of the League of Nations at a meeting with Wilson's advisor Colonel House on 7 January 1919. This was a tactical move by Clemenceau. By conceding to the Americans on the League, he hoped to confirm the Anglo-American security pact and gain bargaining power in negotiating a deal on the Rhine.[225] Unfortunately, this would undermine the work of Bourgeois, who was committed to defending the CIESDN plan in the League Commission. This led to confusion within the American and British delegations as to what the French policy was, as Clemenceau and Bourgeois seemed to be pursuing different goals. As Clemenceau was in charge of the negotiations, his word would be regarded as the authoritative one. Therefore, Bourgeois and Larnaude's position in the Commission was further weakened.

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[220] Wilson opposed French annexations as they were considered contrary to the principle of self-determination, while Britain was concerned about France tipping the balance of power too much in their favour.

[221] In the compromise, Allied troops would occupy the Rhineland for fifteen years, but it would remain part of Germany as a demilitarised zone. Control of the Saar Valley coal mines' output would be granted to France, but the region would be administered by a League of Nations commission for fifteen years, after which its status would be determined by plebiscite.

[222] Blair 1992, 523-525; Goldstein 2002, 11; Thompson 2013, 206, 211.

[223] Blair 1992, 527-531.

[224] Jackson 2013, 231-233.

[225] Clemenceau's decision was probably also influenced by House's argumentation. House had taken the liberty to present the League as a security alliance with the US and Britain against Germany and threatened Clemenceau with a separate peace if France did not support the League. Blair 1992, 380-87.

Having Bourgeois and Larnaude contradict his promises was in fact part of Clemenceau's tactic. He encouraged Bourgeois and Larnaude to fight hard for their amendments on the League of Nations, so that he could 'say that he had tried every means to obtain security for his country before asking for guarantees at the frontier.'[226] Clemenceau was deliberately aiming at the failure of Bourgeois in the League of Nations Commission to obtain stronger guarantees elsewhere. He even told this to Bourgeois and Larnaude: 'Let them win. I do not care. Your failures will serve me in demanding supplementary guarantees on the Rhine.'[227] He was sacrificing the League in order to gain other forms of security guarantees. Clemenceau never relied on the League for French security. It was merely a diplomatic bargaining chip which allowed him to pursue his priorities on the German frontier and in a transatlantic security pact.

In the end, Bourgeois' delegation received little support at the negotiations and only managed to pass some minor concessions. Clemenceau's actions continued to undermine his efforts in the final stages of the negotiations. The final Covenant that was presented to the Plenary Conference on 28 April 1919 essentially retained the Anglo-American conception of the Hurst-Miller draft. Still, Bourgeois kept fighting until the end. He planned to ask the Plenary Conference for a vote on his amendments and wanted the Covenant to be adopted with the formal reservation that France could raise her amendments in the Assembly and the Council of the League.[228] Clemenceau, however, decided that France would not ask for a vote, as he preferred maintaining a spirit of solidarity and unanimity among the Allied powers. Bourgeois still publicly aired his disappointment and what he perceived as the flaws of the Covenant in a long speech in the Plenary. His message was once again undercut when Pichon made an official declaration of the French government's acceptance of the Covenant. The Plenary ended with Clemenceau declaring the Covenant unanimously adopted.[229]

At the opening of the peace conference, there was considerable pressure on the participants to attain lasting peace, but very different ideas on the form it should take. Wilson, Clemenceau and Bourgeois were all responding to different pressures from the

[226] Quote from Cecil's letter to House, 8 March 1919, quoted in Blair 1992, 489.
[227] Quoted in Blair 1992, 533.
[228] Ibid., 549-558.
[229] Minutes of the Plenary Session of 28 April 1919, Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH; Blair 1992, 564-567.

public opinion and national interests. This led to the unclear position of the French delegation on the League of Nations question, as Clemenceau and Bourgeois supported very different policies. This had a negative effect on their relationship with President Wilson, who chose to secretly cooperate with the British. The resulting dominance of the Anglo-American delegation in the League Commission left little room for French influence. The final blow came from Premier Clemenceau, who undermined Bourgeois' work in order to acquire security guarantees on the Rhine and through a pact with the United States and Britain. The result was a League of Nations Covenant that bore almost no sign of French influence.

4.2 Rejection of French juridical and military amendments in the League of Nations Commission

In order to understand the conceptual differences in the Anglo-American and French plans of the League, it is important to examine the debates that took place in the Commission on the League of Nations. As the basis of my analysis, I will use the minutes of the Commission provided by David Hunter Miller in his publication *The Drafting of the Covenant. Volume II*[230]. The analysis will be complemented by the records of the two Plenary Conference sessions (14 February 1919 and 28 April 1919) where the Covenant was discussed. These accounts provide useful insight into the main questions that were debated between the French delegation and the rest of the Commission as well as the dynamics of those debates.

First, we will focus on the two main amendments that Bourgeois and Larnaude fought for: Articles 8 and 9 related to military questions. These were the centre of the French argument that Bourgeois defended up until the final Plenary. The French delegation also made many other attempts to alter the Covenant, mainly in matters related to juridical questions and the establishment of legal obligations. These will be examined in the latter

[230] *The Drafting of the Covenant* is a collection of documents related to the creation of the League of Nations, published in 1928. Miller was a legal advisor to the American delegation, who participated in the drafting of the Hurst-Miller plan and witnessed the Commission's meetings. Although these minutes are merely a record of what happened and not the full transcript of what was said by each participant, they do contain some dialogue and speeches that the participants requested to be entered into the records. Minutes of the Commission on the League of Nations in Miller 1928b, 229-395.

part of this section. As both Bourgeois and Wilson used political feasibility and public opinion in their country as justification for their arguments, special attention will be paid to the domestic political context in France and in the United States throughout this section.

Bourgeois and Larnaude tried to amend the Hurst-Miller plan to include the CIESDN provisions on the control of arms and military organisation. The goal was to assure the security of France, which in their opinion would not have been accomplished with the Hurst-Miller plan. These amendments, related to Articles 8 and 9 of the Covenant, would have introduced an international control of national contingents and arms and the establishment of a permanent international military organisation — essentially, the contents of Petit's report mentioned in the previous chapter.[231]

Article 8 concerned the control of disarmament. Although the Hurst-Miller draft already contained the idea of general disarmament, it did not include an effective and permanent mechanism to verify states' compliance. The French therefore deposed the following amendment:

> The High Contracting Parties, being determined to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of armaments, their military and naval programmes, and the conditions of such of their industries as are adaptable to warlike purposes, *have appointed a Committee for the purpose of ascertaining as far as possible the above information*.[232]

Bourgeois and Larnaude emphasised that surveillance would protect the 'nations of good faith' from being the victims of nations acting in bad faith. In other words, it would assure that Germany could not secretly arm itself and prepare for an attack while France and other member states were disarming. 'One was forced to foresee that certain states might fail to keep their promises,' Bourgeois remarked.[233] He was worried about the lack of an obligation to reduce arms. The member states were free to refuse to disarm, and without

[231] Blair 1992, 479-82.
[232] Minutes of the Plenary Session of 28 April 1919, Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH. Emphasis added; The original in French in 'Amendement de la Délégation Française à l'article 8 dernier paragraphe' [The French delegation's amendment to the last paragraph of Article 8], Item 8, Vol. 18, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[233] Miller 1928b, 318.

effective means to verify whether states were actually complying with the disarmament policies they had agreed to, they could secretly continue to arm themselves.[234]

Bourgeois, Wilson and Cecil all used the argument of political feasibility to defend their view. Bourgeois brought up the French senators and deputies, who had expressed their concern over the weak military structure of the League: 'If we should not take formal precautions in the matter of controlling armaments, this group of men would feel that we were exposing our country to grave risks.'[235] Indeed, French politicians across the board were favourable towards disarmament and a solid international military organisation because the threat of a German attack was such a widely shared sentiment in the country. Also, the discovery by the French public of the lax and forceless union planned by Wilson had resulted in a decline in his popularity.[236]

The situation was very different in the Anglo-American countries. Wilson rejected the amendment by claiming it was unconstitutional and impossible to pass politically:

> We must make a distinction between what is possible and what is not. No nation will consent to control. As for us Americans, we cannot consent to control because of our constitution.[237]

Cecil, too, thought that the control measures would be politically unfeasible in Britain. This type of control would be perceived as a violation of national sovereignty. President Wilson considered that a commission of investigation would 'seriously offend the susceptibilities of sovereign States' and thus be unwelcome in many countries.[238] Bourgeois responded by saying that France was ready to submit to this control and did not consider accepting it as a surrender of her dignity or independence. He pointed out that the measures would be equally applied to all member states by their common accord and could therefore not be considered offensive.[239] In the end, despite Bourgeois' multiple efforts to raise the amendment to discussion in the Commission, it was not passed.

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[234] Minutes of the Plenary Session of 28 April 1919, Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH.
[235] Miller 1928b, 293.
[236] Jackson 2013, 220-222.
[237] Miller 1928b, 293.
[238] Ibid., 343.
[239] Ibid., 292-297.

The second important military amendment centred on the demand to establish a permanent international military structure:

> A permanent body shall be created in order to plan and prepare the military and naval programme, by which the obligations imposed upon the High Contracting Parties by the present Covenant shall be enforced, and in order to give immediate effect to it in any urgent situation that may arise.[240]

This amendment created suspicions in the British and American camps. Lord Robert Cecil saw the French amendment as an attempt to create an international army against Germany and remarked that 'the League of Nations [...] could not be considered as an alliance against Germany. Nothing would more quickly imperil peace.'[241] He also found the idea of an international force contrary to their conception of the League and thought that no country would agree to the establishment of an international General Staff that could interfere in their national military and naval organisation. Bourgeois clarified that the aim was not to create a permanent international army, but to make sure that national military organisations could be quickly coordinated against an attack.[242] Without these preparations, there would be considerable delays to the League's military response, which meant that the country that was under attack would be left to face the aggressor alone. This point was crucial to Bourgeois, because he was relying on the League to guarantee French security. 'Unless this were certain, France would be again exposed to a sudden attack and would think that the League was nothing but a trap,' he warned.[243]

As with the amendment on disarmament, Wilson opposed Bourgeois' proposition, claiming that it would be impossible to pass politically and that it was contrary to the American constitution. Indeed, this was a major concern in the United States that President Wilson could not ignore. He pointed out that 'the argument that has been most employed against the League of Nations in America, is that the army of the United States would be at the disposal of an international council.'[244] Since the nineteenth century, the

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[240] Ibid., 320. Also in Bourgeois' notes for the League of Nations negotiations, Item 117, Vol. 18, Coll. PA-AP, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[241] Miller 1928b, 320.
[242] Bourgeois had at this point renounced the CIESDN's original plan to create an international army due to the strong resistance it encountered in the Commission.
[243] Miller 1928b, 295.
[244] Ibid., 294.

United States' foreign policy had been guided by the Monroe Doctrine[245], which essentially meant staying out of European affairs. This policy was supported by a considerable group of isolationists that the President had to take into consideration. Wilson was therefore heavily guided by the idea of avoiding 'entangling alliances'[246], or not committing Americans to permanent agreements with foreign nations that went against national interests. Whereas the French public opinion was supportive of strict measures and infringements on national sovereignty, Wilson was facing a completely different political pressure from his country.

We see from Bourgeois' argumentation that for France the League was first and foremost a guarantee of security against Germany. Bourgeois' first task was to ensure that France would be protected from a German attack. He tried to establish pragmatic measures that would ensure that France would be protected in case war broke out. In doing this Bourgeois, too, was responding to the pressures of public opinion, which in France were calling for strong military measures. The minutes recorded that Bourgeois 'asked therefore for the insertion in the convention of a formula which would give public opinion the sense of security it demanded.' Wilson assured Bourgeois and Larnaude that no nation would be abandoned in the case of an attack, but that 'we cannot offer more than the condition of the world enables us to give', continuing, 'the only method by which we can achieve this end lies in our having confidence in the good faith of the nations who belong to the League.'[247] Wilson's response reveals the fundamental difference in the two conceptions: Bourgeois sought clearly defined, pragmatic obligations to ensure compliance, whereas Wilson was ready to trust the good will of states if it meant they would have more liberty.

The League of Nations was not a security guarantee for the United States like it was for the French. The Americans did not feel as immediately threatened by a military attack but were rather confident of their national security. Wilson recognised this in the Conference, saying that 'with her great territory and her extensive sea borders, it is less likely that the United States should suffer from the attacks of enemies than that many of

[245] Guiding principle of US foreign policy since 1823, essentially dictating that the US would not interfere in European internal or colonial affairs as long as European powers stayed out of the Western hemisphere.
[246] Term famously coined by Thomas Jefferson in his 1801 inaugural address.
[247] Miller 1928b, 292-297.

the other nations here should suffer.'[248] Whereas the French juridical internationalists were counting on the physical, pragmatic force and guarantee of the League of Nations to assure the security of their eastern border, for Wilson it was more about changing the nature of international relations.

If placed in their political contexts, these debates between Wilson and Bourgeois show that they were participating in very different ongoing discussions. Bourgeois was coming from the context of the French society. He was clearly responding to concerns that were French. The strong support for binding military and legal measures was characteristic for France and linked to its *paix par le droit* tradition and the perceived imminent threat of Germany. From Wilson's American perspective, however, his propositions seemed radical because in the United States the traditional assumptions of national sovereignty and foreign policy were not being challenged in the same way. Although Wilson was calling the old international system into question and therefore challenging the status quo in some ways, he was still operating within the limits of the American political tradition, which would not allow the questioning of state sovereignty or political independence. The pressure on Wilson was also different in the sense that Bourgeois and the French perceived this as a question of life and death, or the survival of their nation, whereas the United States, surrounded by oceans, felt no such imminent threat to their security. Both Wilson and Bourgeois were internationalists challenging the status quo of international relations and the traditionalists in their countries, but both were also continuing the existing pacifist and internationalists currents that existed in their countries. Their political contexts therefore also influenced their views on what was politically possible or desirable.

In the end, concerning the League's military organisation, Cecil suggested instead 'a less strict arrangement [...] which would permit the preparation of agreements on the subject whenever the need for it should be felt.' This suggestion was formulated in the following way: 'a permanent commission shall be established to *advise* the League of Nations on naval and military questions.' This would, according to Cecil, ensure the execution of the verification, but without 'the creation of a control properly so-called.'[249] In reality, this

[248] Quoted in Thompson 2013, 195.
[249] Miller 1928b, 295-296, 319-320. Emphasis added.

power of advice did not accord any more power to the commission compared to the original text. Bourgeois therefore insisted on the more precise formulation, which would create an organism with a clear mandate to prepare military plans of action. In the end, Bourgeois' amendment was put to a vote but lost 12 to 3. Both Articles 8 and 9 retained their non-binding formulations in the Covenant that was presented to the Plenary. Bourgeois could only settle for making reservations and continue to defend his amendments in the final Plenary and publicly proclaim his disappointment.[250]

Bourgeois and Larnaude were also trying to insert some of the legal provisions of the CIESDN plan to the League Covenant. From the French point of view, the Hurst-Miller draft had significant flaws: arbitration was not compulsory, neither the Council nor the International Court could impose automatic sanctions (merely the power to recommend action) and the International Court did not have a clear jurisdiction. The plan essentially relied on the moral power of opinion to guide and enforce the League's decisions, whereas the French wanted the member states to be bound by clear legal obligations backed up by sanctions.

Bourgeois' main problem with the Anglo-American draft was that arbitration by the International Court was not compulsory. Parties to the dispute could choose to refer the matter to the Council instead of the Court. As we have seen previously, it was important for Bourgeois that the League would have a juridical rather than political nature. He would therefore have preferred disputes to be settled by the Court and not the Council, which was a political organ. Furthermore, later amendments specified that if the Council did not arrive at a unanimous decision, 'the Members of the League reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice.'[251] In other words, without unanimity in the Council, the prohibition of recourse to arms would cease to exist and the parties to the dispute would regain liberty of action.[252] Even in the event that a unanimous recommendation was given by the Council, but the state refused to abide by it, there would be no automatic sanctions, as the

[250] Ibid., 321, 346-347.
[251] Article 15, The Covenant of the League of Nations, 20th Century Documents: 1900-1999, The Avalon Project of the Yale Law School. Available at: https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (accessed 5 May 2020).
[252] Bourgeois' speech in Minutes of the Plenary Session of 28 April 1919, Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH.

Council could only 'propose what steps should be taken to give effect thereto.'[253] Bourgeois pointed out the danger in this lack of legally binding language:

> if a Power acting in bad faith [...] refuses to abide by the judgment of the arbitrators or the decision of the Executive Committee, the League of Nations is not legally bound to ensure the fulfilment of the decree. [...] it would happen that nations faithful to their international obligations would suffer the result of an organisation effective in appearance, but in reality, a trap for nations of good faith.[254]

If the League could not ensure compliance with its decisions, the states that followed the rules would be vulnerable to attacks by those who did not. This, in turn, would lead to a situation where 'it would, therefore, be necessary to continue and to conclude separate alliances, inasmuch as the League admitted its inability to offer a formal guarantee of protection to its own members.'[255] Bourgeois estimated that without effective obligations the League could not ensure French security.

Another tactic of Bourgeois and Larnaude was to try to strengthen or emphasise the juridical elements of the organisation. Larnaude, for example, tried to insert an amendment that would have given the Permanent Court of International Justice a clearer and more extensive jurisdiction by extending the scope of cases that could be submitted to it, thus transferring some of the power from the political Executive Council to the Court.[256] Bourgeois, in turn, tried to insert amendments that would have linked the League of Nations to the Hague conferences. This would have created precedents of application of international law and highlighted the juridical nature of the organisation.[257] Both efforts to redirect the League towards a more juridical internationalist conception were rejected in the Commission. Each time that Bourgeois and Larnaude tried to insert some

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[253] Article 13, The Covenant of the League of Nations, 20th Century Documents: 1900-1999, The Avalon Project of the Yale Law School.
[254] Miller 1928b, 290. Bourgeois' drafts of this speech in Items 68-70, 76-81, Vol. 18, Coll. PA-AP 029, Papiers Léon Bourgeois, MAE.
[255] This issue, which was crucial to the French, was brushed off by Cecil, who merely noted that separate defensive alliances were not incompatible with the Covenant. The exchange illustrates the different understandings of the role of the new organisation of the French and the British. To Bourgeois, the League implied a radical change to the international system that would replace alliance systems and other old forms of diplomacy. In contrast, the British merely envisaged that the League would help improve the old system by remedying some of its flaws. Cecil therefore saw no problem in maintaining old alliances on the side. Quote of Bourgeois in Miller 1928b, 380.
[256] Ibid., 349-353.
[257] Ibid., 265-266, 299, 322; Blair 1992, 486.

of the key features of the CIESDN plan into the League Covenant by proposing amendments strengthening the organisation's military and juridical provisions, they were overcome by the Anglo-American opposition that refused to set limitations on national liberty and sovereignty.

This tension between the Anglo-American and French conceptions that centred around the questions of national sovereignty and legal obligations was crystallised in a debate between Wilson and Larnaude that concerned the binding nature of Article 10. This was the article that established the principle of collective security. It obliged the members of the League 'to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League.' Wilson wished to introduce a paragraph that would have specified that regional understandings, such as the Monroe Doctrine, were not contrary to the Covenant. The discussion turned into a debate on the definition and history of the Monroe Doctrine, and crucially, if the language of the article released the United States from the obligation to intervene in case of an attack against a European state.[258]

For Wilson, the Monroe Doctrine was consistent with the idea of the League. In fact, he saw the League as the 'logical extension of the Monroe Doctrine to the whole world'[259], as he explained already in 1917 in a speech to the Senate:

> I am proposing [...] that the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: [...] that all nations henceforth avoid entangling alliances which would draw them into competitions of power, catch them in a net of intrigue and selfish rivalry, and disturb their own affairs with influences intruded from without.[260]

For Wilson, the League, like the Monroe Doctrine, would prevent states from meddling in each other's internal affairs and enmeshing themselves into webs of alliances with unexpected consequences. Larnaude, on the other hand, interpreted the doctrine as an option for the US not to help the Europeans if a military conflict erupted. This resulted in a heated exchange between the two. Wilson assured the US would come to the aid of its

[258] Miller 1928b, 369-374.
[259] Ibid., 373.
[260] President Woodrow Wilson's speech to the American Senate, 22 January 1917. Quoted in Cooper 2001, 21.

European allies. Larnaude doubted this, saying that 'it was a question of imposing an obligation in the name of the Covenant and not to allow states to intervene or not according to the caprice of the moment.' Larnaude tried to get a clear and inescapable obligation for the United States inserted into the Covenant. Wilson, on the other hand, thought that other nations would just have to trust that the United States would fulfil its moral obligations.[261] This exchange is an important illustration of how the French tried to establish a strong and binding League, whereas Wilson was counting on a sense of morality to guarantee states' obedience of common agreements, refusing to place limits on their liberty and sovereignty.

In the end, the Covenant was thoroughly of Anglo-American inspiration and left out the parts that were most important to Bourgeois and the juridical internationalists. The result was disappointing in many regards for the French delegation. The principle of limitation of arms was accepted, but without recognising the need of effective verification, instead only advising states on military and naval questions. The idea of an international army and a permanent General Staff were rejected. There was also no mention of the Permanent Court in The Hague. Bourgeois had, however, managed to pass an amendment reflecting the CIESDN's policy on the delayed admission of Germany. This was possible because Wilson had already changed his mind about the question and agreed with Bourgeois.[262] The greatest flaw of the Covenant in Bourgeois' eyes was that the enforcement of decisions was not legally required. Commitment to procedures and sanctions was voluntary, not statutory, and the procedures of arbitration and checks on compliance with obligations were not clear. Bourgeois blamed President Wilson for this:

> Wilson's personal idea is this: try to convince the United States that they are not obliged to suffer sanctions or to intervene. This way he respects the constitution. All the incertitudes stem from this idea.[263]

Bourgeois was right in his argument. Wilson was significantly limited by the American constitution and Congress that would never allow American forces to be placed at the disposal of an international body. The United States had a longstanding policy of avoiding

[261] Miller 1928b, 369-374.
[262] Ibid., 303-305; Blair 1992, 496.
[263] 'L'idée personnelle de M. Wilson est celle-ci : tâcher de pouvoir persuader aux Etats-Unis qu'ils ne sont pas obligés de subir des sanctions où à intervenir. Il respecte ainsi la constitution. Toutes les incertitudes procèdent de cette idée.' Quoted in Blair 1992, 505.

entangling alliances that Wilson felt he had to respect. This meant that there could be no legal obligations to participate in case of an external aggression against a state's territorial integrity or independence, which lay at the heart of Article 10 of the Covenant.[264] The French delegation had hoped it would take the form of automatic action through an international military force, or at the very least, a clear mechanism of enforcement. The end result, however, was a compromise solution that left the decision of how to handle each crisis to the League. For Wilson, the lack of legally binding clauses was not a weakness because the League would rely on the moral force of public opinion:

> Armed force is in the background in this program, but it is in the background, and if the moral force of the world will not suffice, the physical force of the world shall. [...] we are depending primarily and chiefly upon one great force, and that is the moral force of the public opinion of the world.[265]

Wilson trusted that the pressure of popular morality would be enough to guide states' actions. Moreover, Wilson could not agree with Bourgeois' amendments because the conception based on obligations would mean acknowledging the powerlessness of moral and popular forces that Wilson had defined as the new determining power in relations between nations.[266]

In conclusion, there was a recurrent dynamic in the League Commission in which the French delegation raised amendments or objections that in some cases were supported by one or two delegates from other nations but were ultimately rejected by Wilson and Cecil who controlled the negotiations. With their amendments, Bourgeois and Larnaude tried to establish an effective control of disarmament and a permanent international military structure to prepare for cooperation in urgencies, as well as juridical measures to establish clear legal obligations and enforcement mechanisms and to strengthen the juridical elements of the organisation. However, Wilson and Cecil obstructed nearly all of these, as they were unwilling to create binding clauses that would have limited national sovereignty. The main concern for the French delegates was their country's immediate

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[264] Ambrosius, Lloyd E. (2017): *Woodrow Wilson and American Internationalism.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 144; Thompson 2013, 197.
[265] President Wilson's speech in the Plenary Session of 14 February 1919. Minutes of the Plenary Session of 14 February 1919, Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH. Available at: https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919parisv03/d5 (accessed 15 April 2020).
[266] Blair 1992, 506.

physical security against Germany, whereas for President Wilson it was changing the nature of international relations. Both parties were responding to different national contexts: whereas in France there were pleas for more radical measures, in the United States, there was strong opposition towards measures encroaching on national sovereignty. Ultimately, the French juridical internationalist conception was politically impossible on an international level, because it could never have passed in the British and American parliaments.

4.3 Rival conceptions of human nature

In order to understand why the Anglo-American and French models of the League of Nations could not be reconciled in a compromise agreement and why juridical internationalism represented a third way between Wilsonian idealism and Clemenceau's realism, it is important to analyse them on an ideological level. In this final section, I will analyse the three different conceptions of the League of Nations that were competing at the peace negotiations: those of Wilson and the British delegation, Bourgeois, and Clemenceau. In all three cases, I will identify their underlying understanding of human nature and morality as a central reason behind their differences.

I will start by examining what we know of Clemenceau's thinking on the League. In comparison to Wilson, Cecil or Bourgeois, Clemenceau was clearly more of the traditionalist camp that was sceptical of the League. His policies were guided by his Hobbesian view of human nature and international relations. This will be followed by a discussion on idealism in Wilson and Bourgeois' thinking. I will identify which elements of idealism were consistent with Bourgeois' beliefs and which were not. I will argue that Bourgeois differed from idealism in its most utopian features, including its view of human nature. Finally, in a comparative analysis between the American, British and French plans, I will identify the differences between the Anglo-American conception and juridical internationalism on the pluralist-solidarist scale of the English School, as well as distinguish the understanding of human nature as an essential underlying difference between the two.

First, let us have a look at Clemenceau's vision of peace. Although the focus of this thesis is on understanding the difference between Wilsonian idealism and juridical internationalism, it is still interesting to look at Clemenceau's thinking because he has traditionally been identified as the champion of realism at the Paris Peace Conference. In the traditional historical representation of the peace negotiations, the situation was presented as a dualist confrontation between the idealist Wilson and the realist Clemenceau. This image, however, should be nuanced.

Clemenceau's vision of peace was based on two elements: the balance of power and scepticism of the League of Nations. He revealed his thinking on the League in the speech he held at the tribunal of the Chamber of Deputies on 29 December 1918.[267] During this parliamentary debate, Clemenceau showed that he had a Hobbesian realist view of the functioning of international relations.[268] The phrase 'Hobbesian state of nature' is common shorthand for describing the realist understanding of human nature and state motivation as stemming from self-interest, fear and honour.[269] In traditional interpretations of Hobbes' work, human nature is understood as fundamentally selfish. In his natural state – in the absence of laws and society – man's behaviour is not governed by moral ideals, but his desires. This corresponds largely with Clemenceau's statement when he was addressing the Chamber of Deputies before the peace negotiations and said: 'The truth is that since time immemorial peoples have engaged in constant struggles with one another to satisfy their appetites and their selfish interests.'[270] Clemenceau believed that the behaviour of nations was fundamentally egoistic and that this was a permanent feature that could not be changed. In this sense, Clemenceau was a classical realist, believing that war was a permanent or recurrent feature of world politics that could not be eradicated.

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[267] '2e séance du 29 Décembre 1918' [The second session of 29 December 1918], 29 December 1918, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF. Available at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6465508d.item (accessed 15 April 2020). Clemenceau held his speech in relation to a discussion on the French aims of peace, which at that point had not been made public.
[268] Blair 1992, 363-364, 372-373, 380; Jackson 2013, 231-232.
[269] In *Leviathan,* Hobbes characterises human nature in the following way: 'In the nature of man, we find three principall causes of quarrell. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory.' Quoted in Donnelly, Jack (2000): *Realism and international relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 43.
[270] 'La vérité est que depuis les temps les plus reculés de l'histoire les peuples se sont éternellement rués les uns sur les autres pour la satisfaction de leurs appetits et leurs intérêts égoïstes', '2e séance du 29 Décembre 1918', 29 December 1918, Chambre, Débats, JO, Gallica, BNF.

Despite the presence of this realist logic, Clemenceau was not, however, a proponent of the most nationalist and traditionalist security policies in France and his image as a realist hardliner should be nuanced. As Jackson has argued, with his tough stance on the Rhine issues, he was responding to political pressures in France that were demanding annexations and the occupation of the Rhineland.[271] Clemenceau indicated to Wilson that he 'could not face parliament' without the promise that there would be Allied troops in the Rhineland for fifteen years,[272] showing that he felt the pressure to obtain security guarantees on the eastern border. In reality, his focus was in trying to anchor France in a transatlantic community of democratic Great Powers.[273] This is validated by the fact that he was willing to make concessions on the Rhine in order to obtain the security pact with the United States and Britain. Clemenceau was sceptical of the League of Nations' capability to ensure the security of France. He believed that the League could not replace the traditional alliance system and could only be created as a supplementary system. He therefore supported it as long as it would not be the only guarantee of security. Hence, he did not strictly oppose the League. Due to his pessimistic worldview, he just did not believe it could work.

Clemenceau's understanding of international relations was that of a realist. He was pessimistic about the capability of the League of Nations to bring peace to a world governed by the perpetual recurrence of war. His response, however, was not that of an extreme nationalist hellbent on crushing Germany, but rather exemplified the need to seek security in an alliance of democratic powers.

Clemenceau's vision of peace contrasted sharply with the idealism of Wilson. The relation of Bourgeois' juridical internationalism to idealism was more complex. In this section, I will attempt to clarify the meaning of the term 'idealism' and how Bourgeois' thinking related to it.

As Wilson's politics constituted the 'original' idealism, in so far as the term originated from Carr's description of his liberal internationalist policies related to the League of Nations, his policies can be considered a good starting point in the definition of the term.

[271] Jackson 2013, 231-233.
[272] Thompson 2013, 207.
[273] Jackson 2013, 231-233.

As mentioned previously, no commonly accepted definition exists among scholars, but for the purposes of this study, we can get a good idea of its meaning by examining the characteristics of Wilson's philosophy as well as the larger set of policies developed by other scholars and politicians.[274] The definition that was given in the introduction encapsulates the main characteristics of Wilsonian idealism:

> A political idea that emphasizes the belief that moral and ethical values outweigh national interests and that the system of international relations is capable of transforming into a more peaceful world order.

This definition contains Wilson's ideas of the League of Nations as an organisation of peace that will transform international relations and that relies on the moral force of public opinion. It contains the ideas of both reliance on morality and belief in progress. The latter is an important characteristic of idealism. 'Progress' here implies that the old diplomatic system can be transformed into a more just one, but also the belief that democracy and internationalism will spread among mankind and eradicate ignorance and other obstacles for attaining lasting peace. This confidence in progress was shared by Bourgeois. He thought that the spread of public education and democratic institutions would bring about an intellectual revolution 'that will lead people to appreciate and to understand the superiority, indeed the absolute necessity, of having international organisations which will recognise and apply the same principles.'[275] He believed that with education, the spirit of internationalism would spread and make it possible to create a truly well-functioning League of Nations.

The central ideas of idealism – internationalism, peace and progress – were inherited from the 19th century, but the First World War gave them the push that was needed to spark calls for a radical change in the system of international relations. The war gave the impetus to start questioning traditional institutions, such as state sovereignty, the old diplomacy and the balance of power, as well as their validity and role in achieving lasting peace.[276] This feature was present in both Wilson and Bourgeois' thinking. We know that Wilson's guiding idea was to change the system of international relations by eradicating the alliance system and the practice of secret diplomacy that had led to the First World

[274] Bull 1972, 57-59.
[275] Bourgeois 1922.
[276] Bull 1972, 57-60.

War. Bourgeois and the juridical internationalists, too, sought to radically transform the system of international relations to achieve a peaceful world. They even took it a step further, as they challenged in many ways also the institution of national sovereignty.

The idealists have been criticised for lacking depth in their thinking and understanding of international relations because of their intense commitment to the goal of achieving a certain vision of the world. They have been seen as disregarding the past and its lessons, focusing more on their hopes than the actual evidence.[277] This criticism would seem to fit Wilson, who, although an academic, had not devoted deep, theoretical thought to the functioning of the League. In fact, he had refused to consider the details of the international organisation until a very late date, and in his drafts he relied heavily on the works of others, such as House, the Phillimore Committee and Jan Smuts.[278] Bourgeois, on the other hand, showed in his theoretical works and speeches an inclination towards deep theoretical thinking, as we have seen in the previous chapter.[279] He also had a strong sense of history. In his Nobel speech, for example, Bourgeois discussed whether the League could assure lasting peace and declared: 'To answer this question [...] and to understand the causes of the upheavals which have beset mankind, we must delve not only into the history of peoples but into that of man himself,' and then proceeded to recount the history of human progress from ancient times to the present.[280]

Most importantly, the juridical internationalists differed from the idealists in that they did not believe that moral values outweighed the self-interest of states, or that they were powerful enough to steer states' actions. This is why they wanted to base the League of Nations on the strict application of the law. As states could not be trusted to do the moral thing if it was not in their interests, it was necessary to create conditions in which doing the moral thing was in their interest. This would be done by creating obligations that could not be broken without incurring harsh sanctions. Bourgeois expressed this belief that the selfish impulses of human nature needed to be controlled:

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[277] Ibid., 59.
[278] Cooper 2001, 27-30; Henig 2010, 12-14; Thompson 2013, 197-203.
[279] See for example Bourgeois, Léon (1902): *Solidarité*. Armand Colin, Paris; Bourgeois, Léon (1910): *Pour La Société des Nations*. Bibliothèque Charpentier, Paris; Bourgeois 1919.
[280] Bourgeois 1922.

> Human passions, like the forces of nature, are eternal; it is not a matter of denying their existence, but of assessing them and understanding them. Like the forces of nature, they can be subjected to man's deliberate act of will and be made to work in harmony with reason. We see them at work in the strife between nations just as we see them in struggles between individuals, and we realise at last that only by using the means for controlling the latter can we control the former.[281]

Bourgeois believed that human nature was guided by selfish passions, but that it was possible to contain them and prevent them from leading to violent conflicts. The idea of humans as fundamentally selfish creatures correlates with the realist understanding of human nature and contrasts with the idealist image of humans as essentially moral creatures. However, contrary to the utterly pessimistic image of incurable egoism of Hobbesian realism, Bourgeois believed that there also existed an altruistic element in human nature and that with the help of reason, humans could learn to balance and control the two.[282]

If we compare Bourgeois' position with the framework of the English School introduced in the previous chapter, we notice a strong correlation with that of the solidarists, who believe that there is nothing inherent in human nature or the international system that would prevent political communities from learning ways to resolve their differences without resorting to war. This relates to the belief in progress and spread of internationalism through learning: the international system can progressively become better at preventing war by spreading best practices. In contrast, the pluralist tendencies would be more inclined to believe that states will ultimately fail in the total eradication of war, as it is an inevitable product of human nature. For the idealists, on the other hand, the cause of war is not the egoism of human nature, but rather flaws in social conditions and political systems, which can be improved.[283]

In terms of the three major paradigms of the English School – realism, rationalism and revolutionism –, Bourgeois' position on human nature and progress seems to correlate most strongly with rationalism, which is a kind of third way between realism and

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[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.; Bourgeois, Léon (1909): The Conditions of Peace, *The Advocate of Peace*, Vol. 71 (December 1909), 253-255.
[283] Linklater, Andrew and Suganami, Hidemi (2006): *The English school of international relations: a contemporary reassessment*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 167.

revolutionism. While, like realists, he was sceptical of the morality of humans, he simultaneously believed in progress and the capacity of humans to learn to control themselves, similar to revolutionism's progressive world view. But rather than believing in the revolutionary fulfilment of the human community, Bourgeois believed that social learning would take place through establishing global understandings of permissible and proscribed behaviour by codifying and enforcing international law.[284] Just as rationalists, Bourgeois believed that humans are reasonable and capable of learning from their mistakes. Similarly, states can recognise the advantages of reciprocity in their mutual relations and develop common values and rules. The anarchic Hobbesian system of power relations can mature to a more cooperative international society.[285] As we have seen previously, such synthetic understanding of international relations is common in the English School and underlines the imprecise nature of concepts such as realism or idealism and the impossibility of ascribing any actor into one neat category. In this way, the framework provided by the English School helps to understand that Bourgeois and the juridical internationalists represented a third way between realism and idealism that combined elements of both.

President Wilson, too, seems to have had a sort of dual understanding of human nature as comprising both selfishness and altruism. The difference with Bourgeois, however, was that he placed altruism over selfishness.[286] In other words, unlike Bourgeois, Wilson believed in the power of public morality to guide national decision-making. In contrast, Bourgeois thought that the selfish impulses of states and public opinion should be controlled by establishing clear international laws, which could then help spread a morality that would be based on the rule of law.

Bourgeois shared some of the main ideas guiding idealist thinking, but also departed from them in many important ways. In fact, Bourgeois' juridical internationalism seems to differ from idealism on the points that it has been criticised for the most and that could be called its most 'utopian' elements: the belief in the guiding force of morality, the superficial thinking and understanding of international relations and the disregard of

[284] Ibid., 29-30, 118.
[285] Jackson and Sørensen 2003, 133-139.
[286] Curti, Merle (1957): Woodrow Wilson's Concept of Human Nature. *Midwest Journal of Political Science.* Vol. 1, No. 1, 1–19.

evidence and lessons from the past. Bourgeois developed his thinking about the international system for many years and he did not believe morality could guide states' actions. Therefore, he can be considered to have held a synthetic position similar to that of the solidarist rationalists of the English School. He combined idealism's optimistic belief in progress with a scepticism towards its naiver features. As he said himself: 'We are aware of all the dangers that selfishness and self-interest [...] bring to humanity. We do not believe in the perfection of man […] or nations.[287]

In the last section, I will compare the French juridical internationalist plan with the British and American plans of the League. In this analysis, I have used the official plans produced by each country before the start of the peace negotiations to capture the conceptual differences before they were affected by the diplomatic and political strategies of the Paris conference. The plans reveal a central difference related to the parties' understanding of state sovereignty and obligation, which in turn can be seen as stemming from their different understandings of human nature and the international system.

Several fundamental differences can be found when comparing the CIESDN plan to those of the United States and Britain. The British Phillimore Committee's League was basically an institutionalised Concert of Europe whose members would meet regularly and agree to submit any disputes to arbitration or enquiry and wait for the production of a report on the issue. It did not aim to end war but decrease and delay it by introducing a cooling off period. War was not outlawed as long as one waited until the report was produced. It therefore entailed very little obligations to the states involved.[288]

Wilson's plan, similarly, did not include many obligations or surrenders of sovereignty. In the United States, no equivalent of the Phillimore Committee or the CIESDN was set up. Instead, President Wilson charged his advisor Colonel House to draw up a scheme. House saw that the French military measures requiring the submission of American forces to the use of an international organism would pose impossible constitutional problems in the United States. On the other hand, the British plan did not go far enough for the US because it lacked mutual guarantees of territorial integrity, which Wilson insisted had to

[287] 'Nous n'ignorons rien des dangers que l'égoïsme, l'intérêt […] font courir à l'humanité. Nous ne croyons pas à la perfection de l'homme […] et des nations.' Bourgeois 1919, 62.
[288] The Phillimore Plan in Miller 1928b, 3-6; Henig 2010, 11-12.

constitute the minimum core of the future organisation. House's plan included many elements from the Phillimore plan, but it was based on guarantees of territorial integrity and political independence, obligatory arbitration and an organisational structure that included an assembly, a secretariat, economic sanctions and a permanent court. It also included a disarmament policy, but participation was subject to each government's acceptance.[289] Wilson's plan, which relied heavily on House, included guarantees of territorial integrity and the limitation of arms, but left out the permanent tribunal. Wilson wanted the organisation to be an essentially political one, where arbitration would lie in the hands of a council instead of a juridical organ. However, Wilson insisted on the compulsory nature of arbitration and included the use of military force as an option to back it up.[290]

The main differences between the CIESDN plan and the British and American plans lay in the settlement of legal and political disputes. Wilson and the Phillimore Report only envisaged arbitration courts instead of a permanent tribunal. They also did not include a political organ with superior authority that could directly engage states, but merely a council made up of diplomatic representatives. In Wilson's plan, all use of force depended on the 'Contracting Powers' and not the 'Body of Delegates', or the General Assembly. All governments would thus retain the right to declare war. In the Phillimore plan, it was expressly stated that the 'Conference' could only recommend solutions, not take action using the force of member states. Bourgeois feared that this would lead to a return to traditional diplomacy and incapacity, since no one would hold the power to decide sanctions. The juridical internationalists believed that war could be prohibited and that it was in fact an urgent necessity, which could only be attained through an organism with power superior to that of states.[291]

Like the CIESDN plan, both the Phillimore Report and Wilson's draft also included the idea of collective military security, which implied that a state that refused to submit to the procedures of the Covenant would automatically – *ipso facto* – become at war with all the members of the League. However, this idea of collective security was directly at odds

[289] Draft of Colonel House, 16 July 1918, in Miller 1928b, 7-11; Henig 2010, 10-14; Thompson 2013, 199-200.
[290] Wilson's first draft in Miller 1928b, 12-15; Blair 1992, 230-233; Cooper 2001, 29-30.
[291] Blair 1992, 254-264.

with national sovereignty, which posed a problem for President Wilson and the British leadership. Therefore, in the British and American schemes, which relied on the capability of the moral pressure of public opinion to guide decision-making, participation in any war effort would still be submitted to national approval, as the Council would only 'recommend' what military or naval force the member states should contribute.[292] Lord Robert Cecil defined the task of creating the League of Nations as devising 'some really effective means of preserving the peace of the world consistently with the least possible interference with national sovereignty.'[293]

This is where the essential difference between the juridical internationalist and the Anglo-American conception lay: to the Anglo-American side, the preservation of state sovereignty was superior to collective security, whereas for the juridical internationalists it was vice versa. This is similar to the divide between the pluralists and solidarists in the English school, which is characterised by their differing views as to the extent of the common rules and institutions and as to how much they should interfere with the sovereignty and non-intervention principles of states. The solidarist French juridical internationalists believed in more extensive measures of coexistence and cooperation than the pluralist Anglo-Americans. Pluralism did not require changing the constitutive rules of international relations or sacrificing the self-interest of sovereign states, other than recognising the benefit of agreeing to some basic rules together with the other states.[294] Conversely, the French regime, which was based on obligatory universal disarmament and participation in the collective security mechanism backed up by effective control measures, required significant sacrifices of national sovereignty. The British and American conceptions, united in their will to create a universal organisation preserving the sovereignty and independence of states, were therefore ideologically closer to each other than the CIESDN plan, whose vision of the authority and military force of the League were too far-reaching and infringing of nations' internal affairs and decision-making.

[292] Wilson's Second Draft or First Paris Draft in Miller 1928b, 79.
[293] Lord Robert Cecil's speech at the Paris Peace Conference. Minutes of the Plenary Session of 14 February 1919, Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH.
[294] Buzan 2004,143.

As pointed out previously in this chapter, the main divergences during the negotiations between the juridical internationalist and the Wilsonian models lay in the military and juridical provisions: the international military organisation, disarmament, collective security, sanctions, power of the political and juridical organs and arbitration in the permanent Court or the Council. There is a factor common to all these issues: obligation. It was key to the juridical internationalists to create mechanisms that made sure that states complied with the common rules and decisions of the League. These mechanisms included the control of disarmament, automatic sanctions and obligatory arbitration. In my interpretation, the need to create obligations stemmed from a different understanding of human nature: whereas Wilson was an idealist who believed in the capacity of humans, and by extension of states, to act morally out of their own free will or the pressure of popular opinion, Bourgeois held a more pessimistic understanding of human nature. Bourgeois' distrust of the morality of humans led him to seek binding obligations to modify states' behaviour in the desired direction. Wilson, on the other hand, advocated maximum liberty to the states, because he believed that the states would be compelled to act morally out of the pressure of public opinion. This fundamental divergence that lay at the heart of Wilson and Bourgeois' thinking eventually made it impossible for them to find a compromise which would have accommodated both conceptions in the Covenant.

Each of the three actors discussed above had a different view of human nature and a different view of how to attain international security. Clemenceau believed that war was a recurrent element of humanity and therefore did not put trust in the capability of the League of Nations to prevent it. Wilson, on the other hand, believed that moral values were stronger than national interests and that through the League they would be expressed in international relations, which would result in lasting peace. Bourgeois represented a kind of third way in believing that humans were inclined to follow their passions, but that these passions could be controlled by laws, which in turn would create social learning and progressively lead to a more peaceful society.

By examining the conceptions of Clemenceau, Wilson and Bourgeois, I have distinguished three different ways of imagining peace and security in the international system. Clemenceau was the most realist of the three, sharing the pessimistic Hobbesian world view and believing in traditional diplomacy and the alliance system. However, he was not the traditional security hardliner he has often been made out to be, as he actually

put his trust in the solidarity of the Allied powers. I identified several key elements of idealism that were present in both Wilson and Bourgeois' thinking. However, reliance on morality, which was central to the Wilsonian model and one of the main points it was criticised for, did not apply to the juridical internationalism of Bourgeois. In fact, Bourgeois differed from idealism in its most 'illusory' or dangerous characteristics: trust in the moral behaviour of states and disregard of lessons of the past. French juridical internationalism should therefore be restored to the historiography of the League of Nations and IR theory as its own strand of internationalism, and the false connotations that link it to idealism's most utopian features should be corrected. In the end, the question of human nature lay at the heart of the ideological differences between the Anglo-American and juridical internationalist conceptions and ultimately made it impossible for the two to be reconciled. Their different understandings of the importance of morality in human nature led Wilson to advocate a liberal League dependent on the moral force of popular opinion and Bourgeois to seek strong obligations created through law and force.

To summarise, the dynamics of the League of Nations negotiations can be described as a confrontation between a strong and united Anglo-American coalition fighting for the Wilsonian non-binding union based on moral force, and a divided French delegation made up of Bourgeois, stubbornly defending the juridical internationalist League of obligations, rule of law and armed force, and Premier Clemenceau, undermining Bourgeois' work by agreeing to the American plan, sacrificing collective security to gain territorial guarantees on the Rhine and to maintain the transatlantic alliance. Although Bourgeois and Larnaude fought long and hard to create more binding military and juridical mechanisms, they encountered unwavering opposition from Wilson and Cecil, who found it both ideologically and politically impossible to concede to the French amendments. The differing ideas of obligation and national sovereignty stemmed from a fundamentally different understanding of the nature of humans and the international system. The resulting Covenant therefore retained the essence of the Anglo-American conception.

When the Covenant of the League of Nations was made public in the spring of 1919, the disappointment in France was great, because it did not redeem the expectations of the

French public that was hoping for a strong and armed organisation.[295] Still, the League of Nations was important because it represented the first time several sovereign nations came together to try to combine their powers to maintain peace in the world. History would come to show its weaknesses, which would ultimately culminate in its failure to prevent the outbreak of World War II.

[295] Bouchard 2006, 79.

5. Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined French League of Nations policy during the years 1917-1919 and tried to illuminate why the French conception has not received the attention it deserves in previous literature. I have shown that the juridical internationalist model advocated by Léon Bourgeois presented a third way between the traditionalist and Wilsonian policies which are most commonly retained from the peace negotiations. The juridical internationalists envisaged a League based on the codification of international law and equipped with a permanent tribunal and powerful systems of legal, economic, diplomatic and military sanctions assured by an international army and a permanent command structure. The merits of this conception of the League were not properly appreciated during the Paris Peace Conference because it was overshadowed by the diplomatic and political calculations of President Wilson and Premier Clemenceau. Afterwards it has suffered from disregard as a result of being mischaracterised as idealism and associated with its negative connotations. I have argued that in reality, this model combined elements of realism and idealism in a way that approached the concepts of rationalism and solidarism of the English School.

This thesis explored the political debates in France related to the founding of the League of Nations in order to illustrate the French conception of the League and the way it differed from the views of President Wilson and the British. To understand the differences between these models of the League on a more fundamental theoretical level, I analysed these conceptions in the framework of realism and idealism. As internationalism has often been unjustly labelled as idealism and, as a result, linked with its negative connotations of utopianism and irrelevance, this theoretical framework also allowed for a critical look into these misconceptions and the restoration of a more nuanced image of internationalism. As I have shown, French juridical internationalism was a synthetic approach that adopted the optimism of idealism without falling for its more naive and utopian features, as it adopted some of the scepticism and understanding of power politics from realism.

The method of this study consisted of a qualitative analysis of parliamentary and plenary records, minutes of the League Commission and documents related to the work of the

CIESDN. Based mainly on the methodological ideas of Skinner, these texts were studied by situating them in their historical context. By contextualising the utterances of actors such as Ribot, Bourgeois and Wilson, their intentions became intelligible. These intentions were understood as participating in ongoing public political or intellectual discussions about peace and security and identified as either affirming or challenging pre-existing arguments. The benefit of this method was that it allowed me to identify each actor's ties to other thinkers of the time, their continuities with the past and elements that distinguished them from others.

In Chapter 2, I examined the parliamentary debates in which the League of Nations became a French war aim. I argued that the deputies were very affected by the troubled political context of the war in which the debates took place. They were marked by the fear of the German threat, but also by disdain for the hypocrisy of old power politics revealed by Russian leaks of territorial bartering. This created support for traditionalist measures against Germany, but also for internationalist aspirations to change world politics, reflected in the Chamber of Deputies' vote in favour of the League and the Senate's against. While traditional power politics remained dominant in French political leadership, Premier Ribot's declaration in favour of the League marked a change in official security policy. Importantly, a particularly French kind of internationalism that was marked by concreteness and reliance on law and force was coming into view. The debates were also a testament to how realist logic and rhetoric were strongly present in French political discourse and served to normalise power politics and discredit socialist and Wilsonian internationalism.

In the next chapter, I followed the process of the formulation of French League of Nations policy by examining the work done in the CIESDN. I showed that the CIESDN led by Léon Bourgeois was eager to advance the cause of a juridical internationalist League of Nations, but their actions were hindered by Clemenceau's sceptical government. Clemenceau's actions led to France's isolation from the international debates and the cooperation that was developing between the Americans and the British. The CIESDN planned a League that was based on a linkage between the rule of law and the use of force. Bourgeois envisaged the League as a juridical, non-political and supranational authority, which could legitimately interfere in state sovereignty. The League would be equipped with a robust military system that included control mechanisms that transgressed national

sovereignty. The combination of law and military force was a product of both the personal influence of Bourgeois and the wider current of the *paix par le droit* legalist culture in France. Bourgeois' solidarism shared the same ontology and epistemology with realism, but also exhibited similarities with the English School's rationalist and solidarist inclinations.

In the final chapter, we turned our attention to the international confrontation of the different visions of the League of Nations. I sought to prove that although Bourgeois fought long and hard for his military and juridical amendments, he was ultimately fighting an impossible battle. The reason for this was his inability to resist the united front of Wilson and Cecil that opposed him in the Commission. Moreover, Clemenceau ultimately sacrificed the juridical internationalist League to gain leverage on other matters. I also showed that although Bourgeois shared some of the features of idealism, his views differed from its most utopian or dangerous characteristics: trust in the moral behaviour of states and disregard of lessons of the past. In fact, the ideological difference between Bourgeois and the Anglo-Americans stemmed from this fundamentally different understanding of human nature and the international system. Because of these differences, it was ultimately impossible to reconcile the two visions into a compromise Covenant.

Throughout the process of the creation of the League of Nations, the French government was dominated by voices that were ultimately supporting traditionalist or realist policies, even though their positions were more nuanced than they have been traditionally portrayed. Ribot, although publicly in favour of the League, still mainly pursued realist policies and relied on realist rhetoric. Clemenceau was clearly an advocate of realist balance of power politics, even though he was not the paragon of a traditionalist seeking to punish Germany that he has often been made out to be. At the same time, there was an increasing presence of the juridical internationalist current, which affected the official policies of the French government and gained significant popular support and became thus a non-negligible school of thought in France. Unfortunately, the international and especially Anglo-American context was not as receptive to the juridical internationalist League. In the end, its victory in the Paris Peace Conference was politically and ideologically impossible.

Although I have attempted to provide a comprehensive analysis of the formulation of the French League of Nations policy, I was forced to leave certain aspects out of this study. I chose to limit the scope of this thesis to the years 1917-1919 and a restricted selection of political actors. A longer time period and a more comprehensive look at the political leadership could have given the thesis a wider perspective. My argumentation could also have benefited from a more nuanced and comprehensive look into the American and British actors and their thinking. Similarly, discussions of the League of Nations in the French political scene, public opinion and media could have provided some useful insights. This thesis also could have been enriched with an analysis of the French parliamentary debates of December 1918, where Clemenceau discussed his peace aims, and of June 1919, when he presented the Treaty of Versailles to the parliament for ratification. These questions had to be left outside the scope of this thesis but could provide inspiration for further research.

My research was also affected by some difficulties in accessing certain resources. In particular, a visit to the League of Nations Collection at the *Archives du Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères* could have added to my research significantly. They host the minutes of the meetings of the CIESDN, which would have allowed for a better look into the internal debates of the Commission. In terms of the theoretical framework, discussion on realism could have been conducted on a more comprehensive theoretical level. However, this is first and foremost a historical study, which employed IR theory as an analytical tool in order to illuminate some of the ideological differences between the different actors and the historical development of the realist and idealist paradigms.

I hope that my thesis has contributed to the historiography of the League of Nations by illuminating the French delegation's work on the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference, which has traditionally not been well understood. Historiography has so far tended to omit the juridical internationalists completely or present them merely as another version of the traditionalist power politics aimed against Germany. I have shown that the French programme was not merely an effort to extend the Allied anti-German coalition into peacetime, but a concrete and innovative solution based on the rule of law and effective enforcement. I also hope that my research has contributed to the historiography

of internationalism, which has been skewed by an overrepresentation of the Anglo-American side, by restoring French efforts in the field. Although the works of Jackson and Blair have already started to rectify this historiographical gap, my theoretical and methodological approach has added new perspective to their efforts. By analysing the question of the League of Nations from the perspective of realism, my thesis helps to restore juridical internationalism into the field of IR as a unique synthetic approach to realism and idealism. This framework also allowed me to better illustrate the theoretical differences that existed between Bourgeois and Wilson's visions. By showing that Bourgeois' juridical internationalism differed from idealism in its most utopian features, I have separated internationalism from its unjust linkage with idealism and established juridical internationalism as its own strand of internationalism that combined both realist and idealist features.

There remains much to study in the debates surrounding the League of Nations. The moment following the end of the First World War presents an interesting context for further historical study, because it created a novel situation for the reorganisation of the international system and an opportunity to rethink and rebuild a completely different world. There were many ideas for maintaining peace that, like the juridical internationalist vision of the League, did not materialise and have therefore been forgotten. More specifically, the French parliamentary records have been undervalued as source material and there is much more room for interesting research in the future. Interesting new perspectives could also be gained from a comparative study of the CIESDN conception of the League, the League of Nations that existed and the current organisation of the United Nations. Could the French vision of the League of Nations have performed better than the Wilsonian League and could it suggest some solutions to the problems the United Nations is suffering from today?

My aim has also been to contribute to the ongoing discussion on internationalism and the role of multilateral organisations in the world today. The progress and spread of the internationalist spirit envisaged by Bourgeois in 1919 has not come true a hundred years later. If anything, support for the United Nations and multilateral cooperation seems to be diminishing, while nationalism and highlighting national interests have increased their foothold. The current peace organisation, United Nations, still suffers from many flaws in its design. Public debate on global cooperation and the prospect of reducing war is

therefore crucial and I hope to add a voice to that discussion with this thesis. The model advocated by Léon Bourgeois, based on concrete laws and mechanisms of enforcement that tie nations more tightly to the common organisation might suggest some solutions to the situation we face today. Perhaps it may help us see the flaws of the current peace organisation or of the Wilsonian League, which manifested its ineptitude when the Second World War broke out. Bourgeois pronounced some remarkably prophetic words at the Paris Peace Conference that provide food for thought even today:

> What we should fear the most, for the international institution, is that it might one day be shown to be ineffective and impotent.[...] However, the generations to come, which will not have seen at first hand the atrocious sufferings which a large portion of humanity has undergone, will be less sensitive than we are, and maybe the idea of war will not appear in such abominable colours to those who, not having experienced its frightful disasters may again permit themselves to be lured on by dreams of ambition, of conquest, and of glory; then, indeed, dangers may arise and a new catastrophe be let loose.[296]

[296] Bourgeois' speech at the Paris Peace Conference. Minutes of the Plenary Session of 28 April 1919, Vol. III, PPC, FRUS, OH.

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